

Egyptian plane flies in aid for Iraqi children

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An Egyptian plane loaded with 30 tonnes of medicine for the children of sanctions-hit Iraq arrived here Sunday after receiving U.N. authorisation for the flight. The Airbus landed at Saddam International Airport with an 11-member delegation of Egyptian actors, MPs, union leaders and journalists on board, witnesses said. "The medicine was bought thanks to donations made by businessmen and businesswomen, drug companies and a large number of citizens," Seifallah Inam, a leading member of the pharmacists' union, said on departure from Cairo. He said the medicine, including drugs to fight cancer and diabetes, was worth \$352,950. Syrian actress Raghdia told reporters before boarding the plane that this was the best day of her life. "This trip is the biggest victory in my life and means much more than all the awards I have received," she said.

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Israel's supreme court halts expulsion of bedouins

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's supreme court ordered a halt Sunday to the army's expulsion of bedouins and the destruction of their homes to pave the way for expansion of a nearby Jewish settlement in the West Bank. "The supreme court has given the order to stop the expulsion of bedouins from the Jabalene tribe and the destruction of their tents," a court spokesman told AFP. "The decision is provisional and must still be confirmed by the court," the spokesman added. Dozens of bedouin homes were destroyed last month by Israeli troops to prepare for the expansion of a settlement at Maaleh Adumim, to the east of Jerusalem. The 300 bedouins who live there have since returned to await the court's final ruling.

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Crown Prince visits badia forces

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday paid an inspection tour to the Badia and Border Police Forces where he was briefed on the duties of these forces as well as training programmes. He watched field exercises which reflected their advanced level of expertise.

Palestinian gets 20 months for kidnap plot

LOD (AFP) — A Palestinian was sentenced to 20 months in jail by a military court on Sunday for plotting to kidnap the mayor of Jerusalem last year. Khaled Mohammad Bakrat was sentenced to 20 months in prison, plus a three-year suspended sentence, a military spokesman said. Bakrat and three other Palestinians, all members of Hamas, were arrested in September in Arab east Jerusalem for planning to abduct the city's right-wing Mayor Ehud Olmert.

Palestinian forces discover arms cache in Gaza

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian security forces discovered an arms cache during an overnight raid in Gaza and have arrested several suspects, Palestinian officials said Sunday. The haul included bomb-making material and various types of light weapons, they said, but declined to give further information about the suspects.

One killed in blast in Yemen, witnesses say

ADEN (R) — One person was killed and another seriously injured in an explosion next to a crowded mosque in the southern Yemeni city of Aden, witnesses said. The blast took place on Saturday evening when worshippers listened to a sermon by a preacher known as Islamist the witnesses said. They had no further details.

Arrests made after bomb found in Sudanese government offices

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese authorities have arrested an unspecified number of people after a bomb was found in a local government building, in Wad Medani, south of Khartoum, press reports said Sunday. The bomb was found hidden under the generator of the building of the social affairs ministry in Gezira state, papers here said, adding it exploded after being hurried away by the worker who found it. Little damage was caused and no casualties were reported.

5 killed, 7 wounded in Somali narcotic shootout

MOGADISHU (AFP) — At least five people were shot dead and seven others wounded in southern Somalia on Sunday, as rival gangs battled over the lucrative trade in the narcotic stimulant, khat, police said. Two of the dead were civilians killed in crossfire when the rival gangs clashed in the coastal town of Kismayo, 500 kilometres south of here. Khat, which is grown mainly in northeastern Kenya's Meru district, is legally chewed as a stimulant in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. It is banned in other countries of the Gulf region.

King to pursue Jordan initiative on U.S. direct dialogue with Iraq

By Caroline Faraj
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein said on Sunday he will pursue talks on a Jordanian initiative to start a dialogue between Washington and Baghdad at an upcoming meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

But the King told reporters after inaugurating a new Radio Jordan building that he could not say "when and how" the proposed dialogue will happen.

Jordanian officials said the King, who last met Mr. Clinton in Washington in November, was expected to travel to Washington around March 15. "I think there has been enough suffering as far as the Iraqi people are concerned and I think that the dialogue will be very helpful in clearing the air and in getting us to a point where we leave this problem behind us," King Hussein said on Sunday, two days after Jordanian officials unveiled his initiative.

Jordanian officials have stressed that President Clinton had not rejected the Jordanian proposal out of hand but they said the idea needed further development.

Asked about the proposed dialogue, King Hussein told reporters on Sunday:

"I believe this is the way as I have said time and again. But I don't know when and how it will happen."

"However, I believe that there is certainly a requirement for direct contacts," the King said.

"Commitments that are made directly between concerned parties are the ones that are much more meaningful than following any other method."

"To those who wonder about this suggestion, it is not strange, for even adversaries do meet," King Hussein said.

He was referring to a meeting between top U.S. and Iraqi officials in Geneva at the height of the Gulf crisis, sparked by Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

However, the meeting failed to avert a military showdown and a U.S.-led Western military alliance helped end Baghdad's seven-month occupation of Kuwait in February 1991.

King Hussein said Iraq had to adhere to a week-old agreement with the U.N. under which it granted weapons inspectors unrestricted access to Iraqi sites.

"What is required right now is to stick to and adhere to what was agreed upon," he said. "But beyond that, what do we do... We have to move forward and then we deal with the question of sanctions and with other problems but based on clear understanding between the parties concerned as to where they stand in the future."

News of the Jordanian initiative following Iraq's recent standoff with the U.N. over arms inspections was broken in Amman on Friday by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani.

"The idea is still being developed and we believe that His Majesty's initiative will eventually win the day because it is the only way to resolve the Iraqi problems once and for all," he told a joint news conference after talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan last Sunday averted a U.S.-led military strike against Iraq by brokering an accord with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to allow U.N. inspectors unrestricted access to suspected weapons sites.

Britain has put forward a draft U.N. resolution on the

week-old deal that warns Iraq of "very severe consequences" if it breaks the promise to give the U.N. committee in charge of dismantling Iraq's mass destruction weapons unrestricted access.

The resolution, condemned by Iraq as unnecessary, will be put to vote earlier this week.

King Hussein, in an interview with Orbit TV and Radio Satellite network on Tuesday, said dialogue between Washington and Iraq would be a welcome development to end the suffering of the Iraqi people and to settle bilateral problems.

He maintained that Iraq has been ready for a "logical and sensible" dialogue with Washington since the 1990 Gulf crisis, but that doors "were not opened in Washington."

Iraq has repeatedly called for dialogue with Washington and an end to sweeping U.N. sanctions.

Since 1991, Iraq has been subjected to inspections by U.N. arms experts who must certify that Iraq has dismantled its weapons of mass destruction — biological and chemical agents and long-range missiles — before sanctions can be lifted.

Hamdoun, Butler dispute who will head special inspections

Iraq calls for tit-for-tat sanctions against UNSCOM

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ'S AMBASSADOR to the United Nations Nizar Hamdoun and chief U.N. arms inspector Richard Butler disagreed Sunday over the question of who will be responsible for inspection of Iraqi presidential sites. Iraq's U.N. ambassador told CNN that as far as the eight sites are concerned, there will be a special group in which UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency will be represented, but the U.N. secretary general will be responsible for directing the team.

He was responding to a question about whether Iraq accepted an interpretation of the accord signed by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraq last week by which Mr. Butler, head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on Iraqi disarmament, remains "generally" in charge of inspections, despite the naming of Sri Lankan diplomat Jayantha Dhanapala to head a "special group" to inspect presidential sites.

Mr. Butler, questioned during the same programme, said that the core of the inspections would come from his organisation and from the Atomic Energy Agency, to which diplomatic observers will be joined.

He added that he would work hand-in-hand with the new commissioner who will supervise the group of diplomatic observers but, in the end, the report on the inspections will go from him to the Security Council, through the secretary general.

Meanwhile, Iraq called Sunday for sanctions to be slapped on the (UNSCOM) in charge of its disarmament if weapons inspectors violate the accord with Mr. Annan on "presidential sites."

"The [U.N.] Security Council should warn UNSCOM if it violates its obligations, as laid down in the Feb. 23 accord between Iraq and the United Nations," said presidential adviser and MP. Hammed Youssef Hammadi.

"What are the sanctions against UNSCOM if it does not keep its commitments under articles 3 and 6 of the accord?"

Senators urge U.S. to oust Saddam

WASHINGTON (R) — Key U.S. senators called on U.S. President Bill Clinton on Sunday to reverse course and make ousting President Saddam Hussein a stated U.S. goal in Iraq. "I would say it's our goal to remove him from power because... as long as he's there, we're faced with this enormous challenge," John McCain, an Arizona Republican on the Armed Services Committee, said on the NBC Television programme "Meet the Press." Bob Kerrey, a Nebraska Democrat who is vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said the Clinton administration must change its stated objective, which is containing President Hussein, not removing him. "I would first of all speak to the 22 million Iraqis who have been terrorised... by this dictator and say: 'we're going to liberate you.' The goal is democracy in Iraq and we believe that you can govern yourself," Sen. Kerrey added on "Meet the Press."

Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, agreed on the same programme that Mr. Clinton should press for President Hussein's removal. But Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican who is chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said the difficulty of overthrowing the Iraqi president meant the United States might have to stick to a policy with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

In Kuwait, however, the commander of U.S. forces in the Gulf reiterated that the United States could launch military strikes against Iraq if it failed to honour an arms inspections deal with the United Nations.

"The use of military force is an option we will use if we don't get compliance and cooperation, but only in those circumstances," Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni, commander-in-chief of U.S. Central Command, told the official Kuwait news agency (KUNA) in an interview on Saturday.

The oil-rich Gulf region is part of the U.S. Central Command which is based in Tampa, Florida.

An Iraqi official said Sunday that his country wants to put the priority on repairing its infrastructure in the new oil-for-food accord with the United Nations.

"Iraq wants to give priority to the new plan to the rehabilitation of its infrastructure, which has been badly hit by the embargo, and no longer to the purchase of food," the official told AFP, asking not to be named.

He said that Baghdad aims to "obtain the necessary equipment to rehabilitate its electricity sector, its drinking water, its sewage system, and the agricultural sector." Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sabah is to meet U.N. secretary general in New York to discuss the new plan for financing imports of food and medicine with the oil revenues.

Deputies demand release of all arrested in Ma'an riots

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Angered by the government's controversial ban on pro-Iraqi rallies and the week-long curfew it imposed on the southern town of Ma'an, Lower House deputies on Sunday demanded the release of all arrested in the crackdown.

"[I ask the government] to immediately release all our brothers who were arrested in Ma'an," Deputy Mohammad Badri told the House.

The government lifted the curfew imposed on Ma'an Saturday but left a heavy security presence after having restored order following two days of rioting.

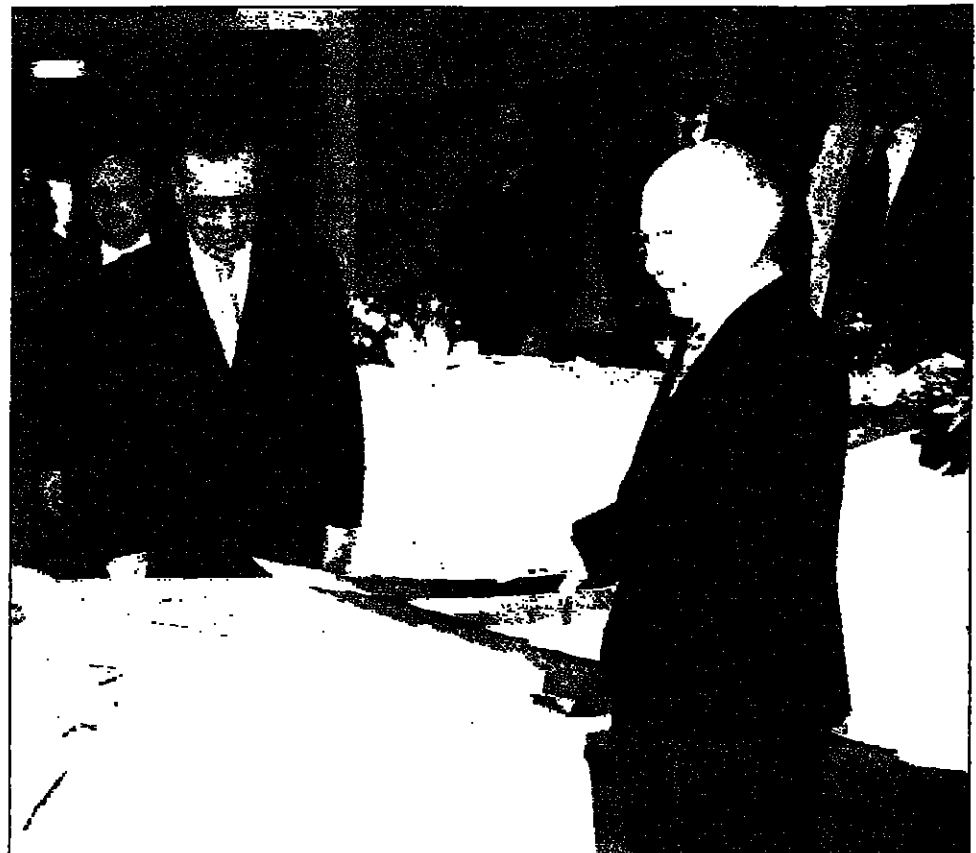
One Jordanian was killed and over 20 injured in clashes between demonstrators and police, which erupted on Feb. 20 and 21.

"This [past] black week in the history of Ma'an has left behind deep wounds and painful feelings, and shocked the young and old by the enormity of the disaster and the severe violence the city faced," Ma'an Deputy Nayef Kraishan, who also spoke on behalf of the two other Ma'an deputies, Ahmad Al Khattab and Walid Awajan, told the House.

"It is sensible to punish the people of an entire town for actions taken by Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour told the House that the government has arrested 44 people and will either release some of them after the completion of the investigations or will take them to court if they find them guilty."

Also on Sunday 13 deputies submitted a proposal to hold a public session to discuss the policies

(Continued on page 2)



His Majesty King Hussein cuts through the cake at the inauguration of the new Jordan Radio premises on Sunday. Radio and Television chief Hassan Ramzi watches from close as Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court chief Faysal Tarawneh, and advisor Salah Abu Zaid stand in the background (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)

King inaugurates new radio building

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said Sunday that Radio Jordan will continue to serve as the voice of the Kingdom to the outside world and will continue to convey to the international community the country's achievements and aspirations.

The King made the remarks following his inauguration of the new premises of Radio Jordan, which cost JD8 million, in the course of the station's celebration of its 39th anniversary.

Expressing his delight on the occasion, King Hussein said that he took pride in what has been achieved

over the years stressing that the station's operations bring Jordan closer to the world.

After listening to an address by the station's director, Hashem Khreisat, the King unveiled a citation for the new building and toured its different sections.

Netanyahu says Israel ready for Lebanon pullout, with security

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Israel was prepared to withdraw from south Lebanon, 20 years after it first invaded, as long as Beirut cooperates on its security demands.

"If the Lebanese government joins us in putting security arrangements in place, we will evacuate south Lebanon in line with U.N. Resolution 425," he told a weekly cabinet meeting.

Mr. Netanyahu said the government did not want a "unilateral withdrawal which would increase Hizbollah attacks against Galilee" in northern Israel, according to a statement from his office.

The U.N. Security Council resolution adopted in March 1978 after Israel first invaded its northern neighbour, calls on it to "immediately cease military action against the integral territory of Lebanon and to withdraw its forces

without delay from all Lebanese territory."

But Israel continues to occupy a wide buffer zone to protect its northern border from attack by anti-Israeli guerrillas, notably the Hizbollah.

Since the start of this year, Israel has lost four soldiers and another 32 have been injured in attacks claimed by the Hizbollah.

Last year's death toll of 39 was the highest since 1985 and prompted widespread debate about Israel's continued occupation.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who is due to visit Paris this week for talks on a possible withdrawal, told the cabinet that Israel considered that Resolution 425 called on Lebanon to control its southern border.

"[Israel] accepts Resolution 425 according to its own interpretation, according to which the Lebanese government must affirm its control and

prevent anti-Israeli action from its territory," he said.

"If the Lebanese government does that, Israel will leave Lebanon," Mr. Mordechai said.

Mr. Mordechai is due to hold talks in Paris from Thursday with his French counterpart Alain Richard and Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, amid reports of another "secret mission" to Europe by two top Netanyahu aides linked to tentative developments on the Syrian track of the peace process.

"We want the Lebanese government, with Syrian, American and French support, to deploy its army in the south, in one single step or in stages, in order to prevent terrorist attacks against Israeli territory," said defence ministry spokesman Avi Benayahu.

"That could take six months, even more," he told public radio.

'Policeman shot in Ma'an was accident'

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ma'an remained semi-calm yesterday after an incident in the previous night caused brief tension.

The incident involved a policeman who was slightly injured in the hand after a bullet fired accidentally from his gun according to Colonel Bashir Majali, Ma'an police chief.

Tension followed rumours that the policeman was hit by a civilian, residents said.

Ma'an Deputy Nayef Abu Hilaleh told the Jordan Times that "Nawasrah himself claimed that civilians shot at him."

"Tension will not end as long as security men scatter all over town," the deputy added.

The army pulled out of the town on Saturday after a six-day curfew was lifted.

The curfew was imposed on the town after two days of riots that resulted in the death of 22-year-old Mohammad Abdullah Al Kateb and the injury of 23.

At least 47 people were detained and interrogated for their alleged involvement in the demonstrations and the clashes with police that ensued.

"The [47] suspects have been charged with involvement in the riots, sabotage, possession of weapons, firing at police and looting shops during the unrest," Col. Majali said.

Suleiman Awad, 45, died Sunday of a heart attack, the colonel said.

Col. Majali said residents' "hostile" attitude towards policemen is not new and that confronting police by youths in the city was considered as a "heroic act."

Col. Majali was responding to charges by residents that police were harassing

people and demands that the number of policemen in the town be reduced.

"Police presence in every corner of the town is provocative and tension will continue if heavy security remains," a senior Ministry of Education official, who asked not to be named, said.

"Despite the lifting of the curfew, several houses have been searched two or three times; we do not know for how long these things will continue," he added.

Deputy Abu Hilaleh said that more than 200 traffic tickets were given to people in the past two days "most of them were unjustified."

Col. Majali said that tickets were given in the past two days because "people in the city were not accustomed to respecting traffic regulations and it is natural to punish anybody who violates these regulations."

Eight Algerians massacred in Medea

ALGIERS (AFP) — Eight people were slaughtered overnight at Ouled Salem in the Medea region, 80 kilometres south of Algiers, the Algerian security services announced Sunday.

They gave no details about the massacre, the second since Friday in Medea where President Liamine Zeroual is on a working visit.

A report said earlier Sunday that at least six Islamists, a civil guard and several civilians were killed in separate

attacks in Algeria, where a mass grave with some 30 bodies was also uncovered.

Two of the armed militants and the civil guard were killed near Ain Defia, 120 kilometres west of Algiers, when security forces pinned an Islamist group down in an abandoned house, the Liberte newspaper reported.

Near Tiemcen, some 450 kilometres west of the capital, four other extremists were killed after a police patrol they attacked returned fire.

The newspaper did not say what casualties the patrol suffered.

It added that "other sources" said a mass grave with around 30 bodies had been discovered, but gave no details of its location or the likely date of death of the victims.

Liberte said it appeared the dead were the result of a fratricidal war between two rival Islamist groups, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). The AIS has been

observing a ceasefire since last October.

The newspaper also said two people were murdered Thursday in the eastern town of Sidi Djemil and the army had found five decomposing bodies in another eastern town, Bouira, 100 kilometres from Algiers.

The country's security forces Saturday said 30 people — including 19 armed Islamist extremists — had been killed in other attacks since Friday night.

The extremists were killed in the western towns of Saida and Sidi Bel Abbas after four residents in the area were abducted and murdered by a "terrorist group" late Friday, a statement said.

The seven other citizens had been murdered overnight in Ouled-Aissa, some 80 kilometres south of Algiers near Medea.

On Thursday, 10 people were killed and 16 wounded in a bomb explosion in the region.

Algerian president announces plan to rebuild damaged infrastructure

PARIS (R) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual, on a rare trip to an area ravaged by violence blamed on Islamist rebels, Sunday announced plans to start rebuilding damaged infrastructure in 20 provinces.

"I'm pleased to announce from Medea the launch of a programme of reconstruction in 20 provinces beginning this year," Mr. Zeroual said at the end of his two-day visit to Medea, 75 kilometres south of Algiers.

President Zeroual's remarks, which implicitly showed the extent of damage wrought by six years of violence, were broadcast in state-run radio and television. Algeria is divided into 48 provinces.

Medea is one of the worst affected by violence, in which thousands of civilians have been killed and many government buildings and infrastructure ruined in a six-year-old rebel campaign of killing and sabotage.

In the latest violence in the province, 17 people died and 16 were wounded on Thursday and Friday in a massacre and bomb attack reported by

security forces. Algerian media said Medea symbolised the struggle and the pain of the people and their government since violence started after the authorities in 1992 scrapped a general election headed by Islamists.

Besides wrecked infrastructure, hundreds of civilians have been killed in Medea in attacks the government blamed on Islamist guerrillas. Thousands of peasants have been forced to flee farms to seek refuge and relative safety in neighbouring towns.

"We suffered hard times and we need the state's help," one local official was shown on state television as telling Mr. Zeroual.

The president's trip and his announced reconstruction scheme came as a gesture aimed at focusing the efforts of the country's 29 million people towards economic and social development.

Mr. Zeroual, naming Medea as one of the 20 provinces where damaged infrastructure would be rebuilt, announced \$8.6 million to fund a 1998-99 rebuilding plan for the

Algerian court condemns four fugitives to death

PARIS (R) — An Algerian court Sunday condemned four fugitives to death for "setting up an armed group," the official Algerian news agency APS said. The court, in the eastern town of Blida, 50 kilometres south of Algiers, also sentenced one man who was in court to 16 years imprisonment and two others to one year each for "involvement in terrorism," the agency said without giving more details. Two other defendants were acquitted. Algerian courts have sentenced hundreds of people to death, mainly in absentia, for "terrorism" — the official term for armed actions by Islamist rebels — over the past six years. The country, which plunged into violence in 1992 after the authorities cancelled a general election headed by Islamists, executed 26 people in 1993. It has not announced any executions since then. Death sentences are normally carried out by firing squad at dawn.

provinces. He gave no total expenditure for the other provinces.

Officials have said rebel sabotage caused more than \$3 billion in loss for the economy in the past six years. Independent economists put the figure higher.

President Zeroual said his visit to Medea was a "true message of hope to the country which is still standing up, thanks to the will of its people and the solidarity of its loyal

Ultra-Orthodox Jews seek new blood to build temple

TEL AVIV (R) — An ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect is searching for parents willing to hand over newborn sons to be raised in isolation and purity in preparation for the rebuilding of the biblical temple in Jerusalem.

Only members of the Jewish priestly caste need apply, the Haaretz newspaper Sunday quoted a leader of the sect as saying.

The movement for establishing the temple wants to keep the children in a secluded compound in the hills of Jerusalem.

"The idea is to raise a child who from the moment of birth will not touch the dead, not be under the same roof with the dead, and will not even be in a hospital... where the dead are also found,"

Yosef Elboim, the rabbi assigned to finding willing parents, told Haaretz.

Once the boys turn 13, they will be able to slaughter and burn a sacred red heifer, literally a holy cow, and sprinkle its ashes on people in a purification ritual last performed in biblical times.

The ritual is meant to cleanse those who have come into contact with the dead and prepare them for the reconstruction of the temple allegedly destroyed in 70 AD.

"Today, when there is no one undefiled who can prepare the ashes in a state of purity, there is a problem which we intend to solve with the help of priestly children," Rabbi Elboim said.

Even if willing parents step forth, the sect will still face a major problem — finding an unblemished red heifer.

Jordan, Israel to commemorate first anniversary of Baqoura killings today

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel are set to host a joint ceremony in Baqoura today to commemorate the first anniversary of the killing of seven Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian soldier, officials said Sunday.

HRH Prince Ra'd, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Defence Yitzhak Mordechai are expected to attend the ceremony.

The long-delayed memorial on the site of the killings is

also to be inaugurated today.

The memorial ceremony for the March 13 murder was meant to take place last May, with the attendance of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Mr. Netanyahu.

But the ceremony was cancelled because the Jordanian and Israeli sides failed to conclude talks on water distribution, reports at the time indicated.

The shooting, carried out by 26-year-old Corporal Ahmad Musa Dakamseh, greatly angered His Majesty King Hussein, who called the

incident "a national shame."

King Hussein went to Israel three days later to personally convey his condolences to the families of the victims.

After a four-month trial by the State Security Court, Mr. Dakamseh was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment with hard labour.

The five-man military court found the soldier — whose defence pleaded he was suffering from an "anti-social mental disorder" — not guilty of pre-meditated murder, instead convicting him of "intentional murder."

Israel to try man accused of links with outlawed U.S. group

LOD (R) — Israel's army said Sunday it would try a Palestinian on charges of involvement in an outlawed U.S.-based fund it alleged paid money to families of dead or jailed Hamas members.

A charge sheet accused Mohammed Anati, 26, from Arab east Jerusalem, of membership in and activity on behalf of the Holyland Foundation, an organisation the army said was linked to the Islamist group.

A fierce opponent of Israeli-Palestinian peace deals, Hamas has killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings since the signing of the first interim accord in 1993.

Mr. Anati was arrested in December and a hearing to extend his detention in custody was scheduled for Sunday in Lod military court near Tel Aviv.

Israel Radio said Israeli security forces in January had seized thousands of docu-

ments showing that from hundreds to thousands of dollars had been paid each month to families of Hamas suicide bombers and Hamas members jailed for life.

A senior Hamas political leader, Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, told Reuters in the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip, "These are fabricated lies [are] aimed at, distorting the idea of martyrdom by claiming that Muslims were killing themselves for money."

"Muslims sacrifice their souls and their blood for the sake of Allah and to be eternalised in Janna [paradise] and not for earthly gains," he said.

The radio said high-level U.S. law enforcement officials were involved in the investigation.

The charge sheet said Mr. Anati became director general of the Holyland Foundation in 1993. Even after Israel officially declared the group ille-

gal last May, he remained involved, it said.

"In this role of his, the accused is responsible for transferring money of the foundation to projects and activities in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] that included support for families of Hamas prisoners and families whose sons were killed in security actions against Israeli army forces," it said.

Retired army Major General Oren Shohar, a former Israeli military coordinator of activities in the West Bank and Gaza, said that Hamas had for years built itself up using money purportedly destined for charity.

"These funds enable underwriting both terrorist actions and aid to what they call the victims of activities on their side — the murderers who do this, or more correctly the families of the murderers," Maj. Gen. Shohar told Israel Radio.

Israel agent sacked for praising Rabin's murder

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An agent with Israel's internal security service Shin Bet has been sacked for praising the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a newspaper reported on Sunday.

The agent, a member of a unit charged with protecting political

leaders, was kicked out last week following a complaint that he had justified the November 1995 assassination of Rabin by a right-wing extremist, the Maariv newspaper reported.

Shin Bet chief Ami Ayalon called in his agents to warn them

that those who expressed their political opinions had no place in the service, after the Rabin comments sparked an outcry in the unit. However, the unidentified agent has lodged a complaint for wrongful dismissal, Maariv said.

Deputies demand release of all arrested in Ma'an riots

(Continued from page 1)

of the Interior Ministry and public freedoms, in relation to the recent unrest in Ma'an.

The proposal failed to pass the House after only 21 deputies out of the present 56 voted in favour of it.

Ma'an deputies, however, said that they will submit another proposal to consider the impeachment of the Minister of Interior.

"We respect the majority's decision but we reserve our right to question the Minister of Interior and to call for his impeachment," Mr. Al Khatib told a reporter.

"The blood of our son will not be wasted," he added.

Meanwhile, Islamist Deputy Abdul Majeed Aqash cast doubts over the recent decision of the Judicial Council to send council president, Judge Farouq Kilani, to retirement.

After only two and a half months in office, Judge Kilani, who also served as the head of the Court of Cassation, was sent a retirement notice on Feb. 23.

"The judge has not been in office for three months, the decision came as a shock to all, and now there is talk about government interference in the affairs of the judicial authority and other institutions," he said.

"It is now known to Jordanian citizens that all those who disagree with the government will meet the same destiny."

He added, "Judge Kilani is known for his integrity and maybe what put an end to his career was the rejection of the Press and Publications Law and his efforts to expose certain people known for their corruption."

The government said that Justice Minister Riyad Shakraa used his constitutional right when he recommended the retirement of Judge Kilani, denying it was a form of interference in the Judicial Council's decision-making process.

Saudi foreign minister meets with Mubarak

CAIRO (AFP) — Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal called on Iraq on Sunday to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions as a first step towards normalising its ties with Riyadh.

"We want Iraq to implement all Security Council resolutions. This is not a Saudi demand but an international one," Prince Saud told reporters after talks here with

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"Once Iraq has complied with this all will be resolved including the issue of normalisation [with Saudi Arabia]," Prince Saud said.

Prince Saud said his country agreed with Egypt that compliance by Iraq with the U.N. resolutions could help lift the tough sanctions which were imposed on the country

after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"If the crisis with the Security Council is resolved peacefully leading to the implementation of the resolutions, this will be a way to lift the sanctions," he said.

Before leaving for home at the end of his brief visit, the Saudi foreign minister delivered a message from King Fahd to Mr. Mubarak dealing

with the latest Iraqi crisis over U.N. weapons inspections.

Officials in Riyadh said earlier Sunday that Prince Saud's talks with Mr. Mubarak would also focus on the stalled Middle East peace process.

Saudi Arabia has called on the U.N. Security Council to use its influence and persuade Iraq, like Iraq, to comply with U.N. resolutions.

U.S. millionaire buys more land in east Jerusalem — report

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A radical American Jewish millionaire Irving Moskowitz has bought another plot of land in Arab east Jerusalem where he wants to install Jewish settlers, an Israeli newspaper reported on Sunday.

The land is in the Palestinian quarter of Silwan, adjoining the district of Ras Al Amoud where he provoked a storm of contro-

versy last year after buying land for settlers.

Yediot Aharonot newspaper said the deal came through after intervention by Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, a champion of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories.

The deal was revealed following a complaint by Israeli intermediaries who are demanding that Mr. Moskowitz, a longtime

financial backer of right-wing radical religious groups, pay them a commission, the paper said.

Yediot Aharonot said the land was previously owned by an Arab, but did not give the size of the property.

In September, Jewish settlers occupied a house owned by Mr. Moskowitz in Ras Al Amoud, at the foot of the Mount of Olives

in Arab east Jerusalem, triggering angry protests from Palestinians and the international community.

After a week of negotiations, the Israeli government allowed 10 religious students to stay in the house, and last month it authorised the construction of 132 settlement units for Jews in Ras Al Amoud, although the work has not yet started.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 The World of Peter the Rabbit and Friends
16:30 French Programmes
18:00 Riding High
18:30 Drama — Neighbours
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Educational Programme
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Hope and Gloria
20:00 Documentary — Perspective
20:30 The American Chart Show
21:10 Maker
22:00 News in English
22:30 Law and Order
23:05 Bay Watch Nights
23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:42 Fajr
05:59 (Sunrise) Duha
11:48 Dhuhur
15:04 Asr
17:37 Maghreb
18:54 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church
Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4623541
Church of Presentation, Swei-
fish Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic
Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church
771331

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly, skies partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy to sunny, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.
Amman 07/10
Aqaba 12/22
Deserts 05/14
Jordan Valley 03/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 88 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Walid Al Masri 5675485
Dr. Youssef Rashid 875792
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 758848
Dr. Khalil Jbali 740740
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Fardous pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 4637055
Nairokh pharmacy 4623672
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Yacoub pharmacy 4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaseh 982799
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Oversens Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Luzmila 4630195
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6
Akileh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667221/9
The Islamic, Abdali 5666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 560240/50
Amal Hospital 5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 08:25 (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al Nafces Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)14111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Sanas (RJ)
08:25 Damascus (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 New Delhi (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:05 Kuwait (RJ)
18:35 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
19:30 Bangkok (RJ)
03:20 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights
04:15 London (BA)
09:15 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Khartoum (SD)
13:25 Bahrain (GF)
14:30 Doha (QR)
15:05 Vienna (OS)
16:00 Dubai (EK)
18:00 Istanbul (SD)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:10 Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30 Athens (OA)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:05 Tel Aviv (RW)
07:25 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
07:15 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
09:50 Aqaba (RW)
11:10 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
12:00 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)

10:45 Frankfurt, London (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:05 Kuwait (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
20:45 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45 Sanas (RJ)

Other Flights
06:00 Istanbul (TK)
08:25 London (BA)
10:30 Al Arish (PF)
10:30 Cairo (MS)
13:20 Istanbul (SD)
14:15 Bahrain (GF)
15:50 Doha (QR)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
17:00 Damascus, Dubai (EK)
19:00 Khartoum (SD)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:53 Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:25 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW)
05:30 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
06:50 Tel Aviv (RW)
07:55 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
08:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
10:20 Aqaba (RW)
11:40 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 Aqaba (RW)



PREMIER RECEIVES RADIO OFFICIALS: Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Deputy Prime Minister for Services Affairs and Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour Sunday receive Sam Younger, the managing director of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and Jean-Paul Cluzel, the chairman of Radio France Internationale and Radio Monte Carlo. Dr. Majali commended the cooperation between the Jordanian media and the two broadcasting corporations (Petra photo)

Delegation to attend African-Arab Parliamentary Conference in Benin

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister for Services Affairs and Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour Sunday will leave today for Kotonou, capital of Benin, to take part in the African-Arab Parliamentary Conference, due to open March 4.

The delegation will submit three memoranda to the conference dealing with Arab-African political, cultural, and economic cooperation, parliamentary support for the Middle East peace process, and encouragement of investments in the region.

Mr. Majali is expected to deliver Jordan's address to the conference, covering recent political developments in the Middle East and means of promoting Arab-African cooperation in social, political and economic fields.

Arab music academy returns to Amman

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Once again, the Arab Academy of Music (AAM) will convene in Amman for the academy's 15th annual meeting, with the opening ceremony scheduled to take place today at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC).

This marks the eighth time that Amman has been chosen as the venue for the event, which will feature a cycle of conferences, concerts and recitals until March 5.

The event is being held under the patronage of Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi and is organized by the National Music Conservatory (NMC) at Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

School continues investigating incident

By Alta Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The International Baccalaureate School (IBS) Sunday said investigations were still under way to determine the parties responsible for last week's attempt to vandalise the institute's property.

"We are not in a position to comment on the Feb. 24 incident until after the police finish their investigations," the school's principal, Rania Farra, told the Jordan Times. She declined further comment.

Parents who agreed to talk to the Jordan Times said the school told them that it suspected a group of 12th grade students were responsible for breaking several chairs in a common room, unscrewing light bulbs, painting several "things" on the walls and smashing some windows last week. The student responsible remained unknown, they said.

But the administration wants them identified and has given the 95 students attending various 12th grade sections a deadline to name those involved in these acts that expires today.

Students have remained silent so far, several parents said. Police on Feb. 24 lifted fingerprints from the scene of the attack, parents and students said.

On Saturday, the school asked parents of all 12th graders to help convince their children to name those behind the vandalism, parents and students told the Jordan Times.

what's going on

Future of 'Peace Airport' up in the air after disappointing results of trial period

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Given the disappointing results of the trial period, experts doubt that utilising Aqaba airport for Israeli flights, as envisaged under a 1997 agreement, will be commercially feasible in the future.

"There is a certain measure of doubt that, if the pilot project is an indication of things to come in the future, the whole project may not be economically feasible from a commercial point of view," said the director general of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Jasser Ziyad.

The concerned Jordanian authorities are complaining that the Israeli side has not respected the terms of the agreement, signed last August by former Minister of Transport Bassam Saket and his Israeli counterpart, Yitzhak Levy, as a step towards a joint airport to serve the two Red Sea towns of Aqaba and Eilat.

The agreement envisaged a trial period of four months, whereby aircraft bound to Eilat would use Aqaba airport and would be treated as having taken off or landed at Eilat," Capt. Ziyad told the Jordan Times.

The agreement stipulated that airport service fees to be paid by the Israeli carrier El Al to Royal Wings, a subsidiary of Royal Jordanian, would be equal to those charged by Israeli airports, which amount to four times those charged by Jordanian airports.

"Details were hammered out in lengthy negotiations between the concerned authorities on both sides. It was envisaged that a humble start of a few weekly flights would be increased gradually to culminate into 15-30 flights a week," said Capt. Ziyad.

"However, Israeli flights did not start [using Aqaba airport] until last November, although Jordanian authorities were ready to receive these flights immediately after the signing of the memorandum," he added.

The first El Al aircraft, a flight from St. Petersburg carrying 107 passengers, landed at Aqaba airport on Nov. 11.

"Three [Israeli] flights a week were requested initially, but, since then, there has been no increase in the number of [Israeli] flights utilising Aqaba airport. To the contrary, some have been cancelled for various reasons," Capt. Ziyad told the Jordan Times.

"In separate meetings between representatives of both sides' concerned authorities, the Israelis promised to increase the number of flights, but so far nothing has materialised."

On the other side, Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Oded Eran maintained that the pilot project was at the top of the Israeli government's agenda, as a way to cement peace and bilateral ties.

"The [Israeli] government Sunday decided to continue the pilot project and increase the number of flights utilising Aqaba airport," he told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview, adding that, however, it was up to El Al, and not to the government, to decide on the exact number of flights.

"But, as the [Israeli] government has a stake in the airline [El Al], it can express its wish that flights be increased and encourage El Al to do so," Mr. Eran noted.

"We sincerely hope that this will be done, and intend to go ahead with the project," he maintained.

Israelis have said they cannot increase the number of flights bound to Aqaba because of insufficient volume of passengers.

But, as the end of the four-month trial period — March 11 — approaches, "negotiations for renewal under the same conditions would be difficult to justify," said Capt. Ziyad.

The eventual building of a joint Aqaba-Eilat airport, the so-called "Peace Airport," was outlined in the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

Anani, Arab diplomats review regional situation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani held a meeting Sunday with heads of Arab diplomatic missions in Jordan and briefed them on Jordan's stand vis-à-vis the Iraq-U.N. crisis and the efforts by His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan and the Jordanian government that helped contain the standoff.

Dr. Anani also briefed the envoys about the King's initiative for the commencement of a direct dialogue between Iraq and the U.S. in order to reach a settlement of their outstanding issues.

In a recent interview with Jordan Television and Orbit satellite station, the King hinted about the prospect of initiating a direct dialogue between Baghdad and Washington to defuse tension and reach a permanent solution to the situation between them.

Dr. Anani also discussed the recent Turkish initiative for reconciliation among the countries of the Middle East. Jordan welcomes this initiative, he said, because it would save the region from further military confrontations that would only have adverse consequences on its peoples.

The minister reviewed the outcome of a recent visit to Jordan by Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, who spoke on the Turkish initiative and initiatives that could promote cooperation among Middle Eastern countries in various fields.

During his review of the regional situation, Dr. Anani stressed that the Kingdom calls for the resumption of peace process for the sake of establishing a just and durable peace and demands that Israel take the necessary steps to put the peace process back on track.

The candidates elected to the JEA council are: Yasar Ghanam, Mahmoud Khalayleh, Wael Saqa, Bassam Dmour, Abdul Fatah Abu Qayas, Abdul Kareem Ajlouni and Abdul Kareem Alaween.

Mr. Abu Gheida said the low turnout was due to the "general trend of frustration" among the engineers owing to internal and external political developments.

The economic difficulties in the country, tension resulting from the Iraqi crisis and lack of progress in the peace process with Israel are the major reasons for this frustration," Mr. Abu Gheida told the Jordan Times.

The new JEA president said council will focus on solving general problems facing engineers but will not refrain from becoming involved in political activities.

"I do not know why we are classified as part of the opposi-

tion and always treated as outlaws," said Mr. Abu Gheida, the former JEA deputy chairman.

"We do not want to politicise the JEA. But we are part of the country and affected by everything that takes place, [both] internally and externally," he said.

"We are part of society and we are open and ready to cooperate with any party that wants to talk with us. We want cooperation from all sides, including the government," Mr. Abu Gheida added.

The government has criticised what it described as the "politicisation" of the professional unions and demanded that the JEA refrain from political activities.

It has also hinted that it will propose to Parliament a new law that would regulate the work of the professional unions and make membership in these associations voluntary.

Mr. Abu Gheida rejected the

which deserves to be condemned by all who are keen on upholding human rights and human dignity," the statement continued.

"From this premise, the IAF condemns the Turkish authorities' decision and calls for a repeal of those rules, which are bound to harm the Muslim Turkish people and open the door for sedition," according to the statement.

Turkey, although constitutionally secular, is overwhelmingly Muslim. Authorities and the military have taken a number of steps, including the recent banning of the Welfare (Rafah) Party, to ensure that the separation of religion and state, as enshrined in Turkey's constitu-

tion, is obeyed.

According to earlier reports, the move followed memoranda circulated to all schools last month reminding both students and teachers that religious attire must be limited to Koran classes at special religious schools. Students at Istanbul University claimed that their mode of dress never presented a problem until the recent directive.

The IAF statement urged the Arab and Muslim World, both at the official and popular levels, to deplore the Turkish authorities' decision and asked human rights groups, women's federations and parliaments "to declare their rejection of this unwise policy which contravenes basic human rights."

Meeting opens to prepare municipalities for merging

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan Sunday opened a three-day meeting by mayors of municipalities within the Amman governorate to discuss the issues of municipal debt and better management of councils' services.

Organised in conjunction with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), the meeting is designed to prepare closely located municipalities for

planned mergers, develop comprehensive plans for development, familiarise them with the municipalities law, and other relevant topics.

In an address at the opening session, Mr. Kreishan said it was important for the mayors to work toward enhancing the concept of local administrative development, which he said is the basic element for successful socio-economic development.

The minister said effective management of municipality affairs will help local councils address financial problems, including a large debt burden.

He noted that financial, administrative and other questions can be settled through the merger of closely located municipalities because, he said, the expanded councils can pool their resources and do a better job in ensuring sustainable development.

Last month, the minister announced that measures were being taken to reduce the number of municipalities in Jordan by 50 by the end of 1999.

The plan, which was begun last year, entails merging closely located municipalities out of the Kingdom's 449 municipal councils to form major councils.

The minister pledged continued government support for developing municipal council services and promoting the efficiency and skill of personnel in technical, administrative and financial matters.

Islamist candidate Abu Gheida elected JEA president

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An Islamist candidate was elected as president of the powerful Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) after two days of elections that failed to draw a majority of members.

Husni Abu Gheida defeated Abdo Ali, a candidate representing a coalition of pan-Arabists and leftists in the JEA, collecting 3,160 votes to Mr. Ali's 1,570.

Azzam Huneidi, another candidate from the Islamist bloc, was elected as the JEA deputy chairman. Seven other members from the Islamist bloc won all the seats in the JEA's ruling council.

The results, which were announced late Saturday, showed that 4,867 out of a total of an eligible membership of 13,199, or 36 per cent, cast votes. Total JEA membership is more than 38,000.

government's proposed plan, saying that such a step might be "disastrous" for the profession and the association.

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Management	: 4658693

Pro-countryside protesters march through London

LONDON (R) — Around 85,000 pro-countryside demonstrators marched through central London Sunday to protest against government policies which they say are threatening their way of life.

The hunters, butchers, farmers, landowners and thousands of others represented a powerful reminder to the new Labour government of the power of the rural lobby.

The organisers of the march, who had predicted 250,000 people would take part, said they expected more to join later in the day.

The demonstrators, who travelled to London from the farthest corners of Britain, moved off from Trafalgar Square to the sound of hunting horns and slowly made their way towards Hyde Park.

The march was spurred largely by opposition to next week's parliament debate on a bill to ban hunting with hounds but brought together rural people with a wide range of other grievances.

"This is about the preservation of a livelihood, not

the protection of a pastime," said Paddy Ashdown, leader of the minority Liberal Democrat Party.

"I hope this will present a powerful united voice about the threat to the rural way of life."

Farmers suffering from a strong pound and cheap imports are angry at the government's decision last December to ban beef on the bone because of worries that mad cow disease may enter the human food chain, despite evidence that the medical risk is tiny.

"Stop this silly banning of beef on the bone. People have the choice to smoke so leave us the choice of what to eat," said a butcher from Bath.

Country dwellers also complained of poor public transport and lack of local facilities like hospitals and schools, while some said they were threatened by large scale housing developments.

Environment Minister Michael Meacher was to attend the march but Prime Minister Tony Blair's government appeared divided

and uncertain whether to condemn or applaud it.

Agriculture Minister Jack Cunningham contended that "vested interests" were behind the rally and said they had cornered hundreds of thousands of "decent country folk" into taking part.

He told the Sunday Express newspaper that he was worried that the American gun lobby and absentee landlords had promoted the protest.

The protesters' core issue — their passionate defence of foxhunting — puts them on the other side of the barricades to most labour members of parliament.

Mr. Blair's government is overwhelmingly anti-hunting but has indicated it will not supply parliamentary time to allow backbench Labour MP Michael Foster's private bill to become law — a compromise that is likely to leave both sides feeling betrayed.

"If the bill is passed the foxes will be shot out of extinction," said John Harrison, master of the Ullswater hunt in northwest England, who was dressed

in traditional blood-red jacket, helmet and riding boots.

Two of Cunningham's junior aides from the agriculture ministry were supposed to represent the government but one of them refused, saying the protest had been hijacked by blood sports groups and the opposition conservatives.

The government has however hurriedly tried to mollify country voters, who helped labour to a huge majority in last May's general election — more than 100 legislators from the traditionally urban party now hold rural seats.

Labour has softened plans to ensure rambles have a statutory "right to roam" across privately-owned open land. Plans to build 4.4 million new homes in the countryside have also been scaled back in favour of redevelopment of derelict urban sites.

The government has promised to do more to stop rural schools closing and stressed that its long-term policies on health, education, welfare and transport will benefit country people.



Some 85,000 pro-country demonstrators begin their march through central London to protest against government policies which they say are threatening to their way of life (Reuters photo)

'Same Old Song' hits high note at French Oscars

PARIS (R) — The musical comedy "On Connait La Chanson" (Same Old Song) hit the right note at this weekend's French film awards, picking up seven of the cherished Oscars including those for best film and best actor.

Director Alain Resnais' quirky movie uses lines from popular French songs to poke fun at the foibles of modern Parisians in search of love and apartments.

It proved an unexpected success at the box office in 1997 — a good year in terms of ticket sales with home-grown films taking 34 per cent of the total market.

The biggest grossing picture, the science fiction yarn "The Fifth Element", won Luc Besson a Cesar for best director at Saturday night's glitzy ceremony — France's equivalent of the Oscars.

The action-packed movie, which was shot in English and stars U.S. actor Bruce Willis, also took awards for best cinematography and best design.

But the night really belonged to "Same Old Song", which won best actor award for André Dussollier, best supporting actor for Jean-Pierre Baer and best supporting actress for Agnes Jaoui. It also took the best screenplay, best sound and best editing awards.

With the help of brief extracts from 30 songs, the film tracks a group of city neurotics who fall in and out of love with each other while searching for apartments with views of the Eiffel Tower.

Unlike Hollywood films, which often use short extracts of pop music to set the background mood, "Same Old Song" has the actors suddenly bursting out a few lines of melodies about their aching hearts before cutting back to their dialogue.

The film had already won the prestigious prix Louis Delluc as best French film of 1997 and had been a hot favourite to lead the way at the Cesars.

One top award to elude



French director Luc Besson holds his 'Cesar' award as 'Best Director' for his film the '5th Element' during the presentation ceremony of the French Film Industry awards (Reuters photo)

"Same Old Song" was that for best actress, which went to a tearful Ariane Ascaride for her part in the hit romantic comedy "Marius et Jeannette".

Best foreign film went to the British picture "Brassed Off" by Director Mark Herman, which saw off competition from Woody Allen's musical "Everyone Says I Love You", box office smash "The Full Monty", Oscar winner "The English Patient" and Takeshi Kitano's "Hana-Bi".

Other foreigners to pick-up Cesars were U.S. actors Clint Eastwood and Michael Douglas, who won special awards in recognition of their work in cinema.

A third special award went to cult French director Jean-Luc Godard, who used the

China dismisses Dalai Lama talks offer

BEIJING (AFP) — China Sunday dismissed a long-standing offer from the Dalai Lama for talks over the future of Tibet, saying the spiritual leader showed his true colours by refusing a 1989 offer from Beijing.

"The 14th Dalai Lama suspended his contact with the central government when he thought the international situation was in his favour and now demands negotiations when he thinks the situation is moving against him," Xinhua said.

"The 14th Dalai Lama has never sought genuine talks with the central government of China over the last ten years," the news agency said in a commentary based on an article in "China's Tibet" magazine.

The Dalai Lama fled from Tibet to India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Beijing's rule.

In 1989, Beijing says it contacted him and asked him to return to China for the funeral of the second-highest spiritual leader, the Panchen Lama, who remained in China after the uprising.

But the Dalai Lama apparently refused.

Later that year he went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize and has continued to highlight the plight of the Tibetan people, calling regularly for a resumption of talks with Beijing over the region's future.

These have never materialised because of China's suspicions that he is attempting to create an independent Tibet.

"When the 14th Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, he misjudged the situation and began predicting that China was likely to collapse after the political turmoil of 1989," Xinhua said.

"Against his expectations, China remains stable and in view of this the 14th Dalai Lama has proposed the resumption of contacts with the central government," it added.

"China enjoys a stable situation and rapid economic growth. It has improved relations with the United States and some countries in the European Union have readjusted their policies towards China," the news agency said.

"Under this situation the 14th Dalai Lama worries that his interests will be neglected," it said, adding that his agents could no longer incite riots in Tibet because of the improving economic situation there.

Cambodian ceasefire falters as resistance objects to Phnom Penh's terms

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's fragile ceasefire agreement appeared to falter Sunday as the resistance loyal to deposed co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh said Phnom Penh's terms were "unacceptable" and tantamount to demanding a surrender.

The government's ceasefire conditions "are not acceptable," said a source close to the prince who was effectively ousted by strongman Hun Sen in fierce fighting last July.

"It is like a surrender they are asking for," the source said on condition of anonymity. "They call us extremists and they want us to return all weapons," the source said, adding the resistance army had made clear its intention to maintain the right to self-defence.

Prince Ranariddh, whose unilateral ceasefire order Friday was matched by Phnom Penh, has also called for the creation of an "ad hoc bipartite commission" to monitor the truce with international observers.

The government's declaration makes no mention of such a commission and instead calls for "working groups" to be set up to facilitate the reintegration of Prince Ranariddh's soldiers in the government army.

There was no immediate reaction to the comments from the government in Phnom Penh but several hundred handicapped soldiers, led by prominent dissident Sam Rainsy, gathered in the capital in a pre-planned demonstration urging peace and an end to conflicts which have engulfed Cambodia since 1970.

More than 700 disabled veterans, many left limbless from landmine explosions, called for better benefits and for the government to respect the international treaty banning the use of anti-personnel landmines which it signed in December.

The Khmer Rouge announcement was not unexpected as they had been pointedly omitted from the ceasefire. "This is not a surprise," said Khieu Kanharith, Phnom Penh's chief spokesman.

The ceasefire is for Prince Ranariddh's troops, not the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge radio report accused Hun Sen of "still wanting to destroy the Cambodian people."

It said he had never respected the result of elections organised by the United Nations in 1993 which the royalist FUNCINPEC won and had no intention of handing over power to the party.

The Khmer Rouge boycotted the 1993 polls. The radio made no mention of any fighting between its guerrillas and government forces Saturday. According to the Thai army the situation has been quiet for several days along the Thai-Cambodian border.

Russian fishermen find novel use for Barbie dolls

MOSCOW (R) — Fishermen in Russia's far east have been buying up Chinese-made Barbie dolls and using their golden hair as bait, Interfax news agency said Sunday.

Fishermen in the northern Pacific port of Magadan were quoted as saying the hair is very popular with the local fish.

They have not been able

Zyuganov raps Yeltsin on government changes

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Communist party leader Gennady Zyuganov Sunday accused President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of ignoring the people and said they had been too timid in their latest cabinet reshuffle.

"The president and prime minister have forgotten how to listen to the country and have taken a course of neglecting public opinion," Mr. Zyuganov told Interfax news agency.

Mr. Zyuganov, whose party holds the largest number of seats in the state Duma (lower house of parliament), said the sacking of three ministers Saturday was irrelevant because key figures remained in place.

He said Mr. Yeltsin should have axed his liberal first deputy prime ministers, Anatoly Chubais and Boris Nemtsov, and other market reformers who he said were responsible for Russia's economic decline.

Saturday the Kremlin announced the dismissal of Valery Serov, deputy prime minister in charge of relations with former Soviet republics.

Transport Minister Nikolai Tsakh and Education Minister Vladimir Kinelyov.

Mr. Yeltsin had indicated

a while back that he was not satisfied with the cabinet's performance and had said some ministers were likely to lose their jobs but the changes have, so far at least, been more modest than expected.

Mr. Zyuganov, defeated by Mr. Yeltsin in the last presidential election in July 1996, praised Mr. Serov for forging closer ties between Russia and other former Soviet republics such as Belarus and Ukraine.

Russia has formed a loose economic union with Belarus and has seen a big improvement in troubled ties with Ukraine over the past year culminating in last week's state visit to Moscow by President Leonid Kuchma.

"(Serov's sacking) means that yet again the grouping has won which does not want closer contacts and friendship with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and loathes everything Slavic," Interfax quoted Mr. Zyuganov as saying.

Liberal members of Mr. Yeltsin's team oppose closer economic ties with Belarus, whose authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko has rejected carrying out radical market reforms.

Australian-based South African advises would-be refugees not to rush

PERTH, Australia (AFP) — A white South African who fled her homeland to seek refugee status in Australia, warned Sunday that others considering the move should think carefully.

Cherry Kennedy said she left after being subjected to a string of robberies, her brother was shot and killed, a gun was held at her daughter's head, and their home was burned down.

But, while claiming violence in South Africa as one reason for seeking refugee status in Australia, she said it was not easy seeking a new life elsewhere.

"It can be very difficult having to start all over again in a new country, and you have to weigh things up awfully carefully before taking the plunge," Ms. Kennedy told AFP.

"You have to consider your network of family and friends, and think of all the other things you take for granted and will be giving up by going to another part of the world."

She said her biggest regret was what the move had done to her children.

Her daughters, Camille, 10, and Gisselle, 8, did not understand why they fled their homeland for a strange new country, leaving behind relatives, friends and even toys.

Ms. Kennedy, 39, a single mother from Johannesburg, is living in tropical Broome, a port town 2,250 kilometres north of here, where she is planning the next move in her battle to gain permanent residence in Australia.

The Australian government rejected her initial application for refugee status on the grounds of anti-white prejudices and violence which she said exist in the new South Africa.

The Kennedys are believed to be the first white South Africans to seek refugee status in Australia. Her parents and four brothers live in Johannesburg.

Ms. Kennedy is now considering whether to appeal to the Immigration Review Board, which is empowered to overturn the government's decision.

If an appeal fails, she has other options. A South African businessman living in Perth has provided her with a lawyer who is working out what he sees

as the best strategies. But, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock has dampened prospects that an appeal on refugee grounds will succeed.

Mr. Ruddock says refugee status, as defined by the United Nations Convention, is the preserve of people persecuted in their own country.

"It's a lot more than a partner suffering domestic violence ... or a belief that they are unable to be safe and secure in their own country," he said.

Ms. Kennedy said that in her last 10 years in South Africa, before leaving last July, she had been robbed 12 times, mugged five times, had three cars stolen, had a gun held to the head of her younger daughter and her brother, Brett, 25, was fatally shot 18 months ago.

"We also had our wooden farmhouse, in Bryanston, 30 km north of Johannesburg, burned to the ground last March," she said.

Ms. Kennedy says that, while she has no regrets for herself about leaving South Africa, she feels sorry for her daughters.

"Their foundations were destroyed when the house was burned," she says. "They lost all their toys ... everything. It is very difficult for them because they do not know why we are here. Before we left home, I was not able to convey to them that we can't go back. They just can't grasp that. They are missing grannie and everyone."

"The younger one has the extra problem of being physically afraid, because before we came here she had a gun held to her head ... that trauma is still with her."

Ms. Kennedy originally planned to go underground if she failed to gain legal status in Australia.

"But such thoughts have now been abandoned," she said.

"Going underground is now not an option ... not with the children. We do not want to live on the run. The girls have had such a hard time, it would kill them to be illegal like that."

"We just don't want to be running away from everyone in a uniform, or to have to cover up the number on the car."

So they'll play by the Australian government's rules — and hope.

Mudslide near Macchu Picchu knocks out power station

LIMA (AFP) — A massive mudslide near the Inca ruins of Macchu Picchu swept away homes and knocked out an important regional hydro-electric station, Peruvian Energy Minister Daniel Hokama reported.

Early reports indicating that some 50 workers had vanished in the cascading mud have not been confirmed.

The massive mudslide severed the railroad line linking Cuzco with the nearby town

of Quillabamba, but did not touch the ruins, Peru's single most important tourist attraction.

The flow of tourists to the site has not been affected, officials said.

However it will take "several months" for the power plant to be operational again and fully supply the departmental capital of Cuzco with electricity, Mr. Hokama said.

The city in the meantime is using electricity from an alter-

nate nearby power plant, but the dearth of energy has affected the outlying cities and industries in the region.

Mr. Hokama is scheduled to fly over the site in a helicopter later in the day with area officials and deliver supplies to residents stranded in the mountainous region.

The government's strategy in handling El Nino-related weather disasters has been to assign a minister to handle the situation at each location.

كروا في الجبل

Kim says peace with North possible, unity difficult for now

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean President Kim Dae-jung Sunday called on North Korea to exchange presidential envoys, saying peace was possible if both sides tried but it was too early to try to unify the peninsula.

"Taking this opportunity today, I propose to the North Korean government authorities once again to exchange special envoys," Mr. Kim said.

"It would be difficult to unify the country right now. However the elimination of the possibility of war and such changes as interaction and cooperation with each other are possible, if both sides make up their minds," Mr. Kim said.

Addressing the nation on the 97th anniversary of the Korean independence movement against Japanese colonial rule, the president also said he was ready to hold a dialogue "at any level."

"More than anything else we must carry out reunions of divided families as soon as possible, or at least confirm whether the members are still alive or have passed away," he said, adding that families divided by the 1950-53 war were ageing and dying without knowing the fate of their relatives.

"To solve this problem, any formula — including negotiations between the Red Cross Societies or government organisations, will be fine with us," he said, adding that a North Korean announcement on divided families gave the South "great expectations."

Mr. Kim went on to outline his three basic principles — respect between the North and South of each other's (political) systems, both sides refraining from "action detrimental to the other side" and all possible efforts for peaceful coexistence.

He also endorsed ongoing four-party peace talks designed to replace the 1953 Korean truce with a permanent peace regime, and endorsed a 1992 North-South basic agreement on non-aggression signed during a brief thaw in relations. Those talks involve the two Koreas with China and

the United States in a support role and are scheduled to resume in Geneva this month.

North Korea Saturday reacted for the first time to Mr. Kim's proposals made in his inauguration speech last Wednesday, calling them "disappointing."

"It has disappointed the nation that he failed to clearly show a willingness to pursue a policy quite different from his predecessor's for unification," the official ruling Workers' Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun said in an editorial carried by the Korean Central News Agency.

"... We hope to have no impressions that there is no change in inter-Korean relations and the reunification issue though there was another change of regime in South Korea," it said.

"Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation are good and dialogue and negotiations are also desirable. But what is more important is to have a correct view of the past and draw a proper lesson from it," it said.

Commentators here noted however that rather than reject or criticise Mr. Kim's proposals, including the exchange of presidential envoys, the editorial appeared to be saying that the proposals did not go far enough.

Shortly after Mr. Kim's speech Sunday officials said Seoul would grant its businessmen greater freedom of investment in North Korea. A presidential official told Yonhap news agency that the government would radically simplify administrative procedures to speed up investment in the North.

The ceiling on investment in the Communist North would be raised, he said.

"Once regulations are abolished or eased, there will be a big increase in our business investment in North Korea's infrastructure projects," the official was quoted as saying.

Since 1994 South Korean businessmen have not been allowed to invest more than \$5 million in the North because of lingering political tensions which have soured peace talks.



Christian Wulff, top candidate of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) for today's state election in Lower Saxony and challenger of social democratic Prime Minister Gerhard Schröder casts his vote beside his wife Christiane in a polling station in the northern German city of Osnabrueck (Reuters photo)

Police arrests 150 over Karachi killings

KARACHI (AFP) — Police arrested some 150 activists of an ethnic faction for the recent series of violence that rocked Pakistan's commercial capital Karachi, police and party sources said Sunday.

Police conducted raids in the eastern Korangi and Landhi districts and picked up suspects from the volatile areas of this southern port city.

The crackdown came as a wave of violence claimed 30 lives in 10 days including the Feb. 22 killing of eight people by unidentified gunmen in Korangi district.

The city's powerful Muttahida Qaumi Movement, which represents the Urdu-speaking settlers, blamed the Korangi killings on militants of its splinter group known as MQM-Haqiqi which has denied involvement in the violence.

The MQM-Haqiqi condemned the raids saying that police whisked away some 150 workers and supporters of the group in the past 24 hours.

Officials said people had been detained for interrogation but gave no figures.

The mainstream MQM, allied with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government had threatened to pull its support from the government if authorities failed to take action against the killers.

Residents said groups of angry youths took to the streets to protest the arrests as they

chanted slogans, lit bonfires, hurled stones at vehicles and barricaded roads in Korangi Sunday.

Paramilitary troops and police patrolled the troubled areas while "firing echoed throughout the night," a resident said. Officials said security checks had been stepped up after recent bombing incidents and the murder of two Iranian construction engineers last week.

Eight people were killed in two bomb blasts in a suburban Karachi district Saturday while an earlier blast outside a Shiite Muslim mosque seriously wounded three people shortly after the February 21 murder of the two Iranians.

The southern Pakistani port city with more than 10 million people has been plagued by recurring unrest which police has blamed on feuding political factions, criminal mafias and Muslim sectarian militants.

Karachi has a history of political, ethnic and religious violence that has claimed more than 3,000 lives during recent years.

Sectarian violence involving militants of extremist Sunni and Shiite sects of Muslims has claimed 250 lives in the country's political heartland and the most populous province of Punjab, also rocked by bombings last week claiming 10 lives.

Lower Saxony vote — primary for German national election

BONN (AFP) — Voters went to the polls Sunday in Lower Saxony for regional elections that might boost the state's governor, Gerhard Schröder, into the office of German chancellor.

Mr. Schröder was almost certain to win reelection, but the main question was whether his margin of victory would be sufficient to garner the left's nomination to take on Chancellor Helmut Kohl in September's national ballot.

The 5,900,000 registered voters of Lower Saxony began casting their ballots at 0700 GMT to elect a regional parliament that also chooses the state governor.

The election has taken on national proportions as a primary to determine who will lead the main opposition party, the Social Democrats (SPD), against Mr. Kohl, 67, who has run Germany at the head of a conservative coalition since 1982.

The first unofficial results from polling agencies and television are expected at about 1700 GMT, as soon as polls close. Mr. Schröder, 53, has said a

good score in his northern state should guarantee him the SPD nomination over party leader Oskar Lafontaine, 54.

Mr. Schröder has cannily pitted what he says will be his proof as a winner — as a pro-business centrist who can also garner votes from the right — against Mr. Lafontaine, a traditional welfare-state-oriented leftist who was soundly beaten by Mr. Kohl in general elections in 1990.

The SPD has said it will announce in Bonn Monday its candidate for the general elections.

Some 2,000 journalists from all over the world are expected in the Lower Saxony capital Hanover Sunday, an unprecedented amount of press coverage for a German state election.

Their presence shows just how much Mr. Schröder has turned his state ballot into a challenge that he hopes will result in a national mandate, namely the SPD candidacy for chancellor.

The Berliner Morgenpost newspaper reported in Berlin Saturday that Mr. Lafontaine was ready to give Mr. Schröder the nomination even if the SPD

loses an absolute majority in the Lower Saxony parliament.

What will count will be the overall percentage in the parliamentary vote.

Mr. Schröder has said he should have the nomination if he keeps within two points of the 44.3 per cent score the SPD had in 1994 in the previous state election.

Polls show Mr. Schröder on schedule to meet his target. Mr. Lafontaine's strength is that the party

prefers him to Mr. Schröder.

The mayor of Bremen, Henning Scherf of the SPD, said in a television interview: "Winners are good. People who cannot keep their (previous) results (will) have a problem."

Mr. Kohl has recognised what is at stake as he has come from Bonn no fewer than 10 times to campaign in Lower Saxony on behalf of Christian Wulff, his Christian Democratic Union's (CDU) candidate against Mr. Schröder, who is going for his third term.

Mr. Wulff, 38, was soundly beaten by Schröder in the 1994 state election. Mr. Kohl would rather run against Mr. Lafontaine than

Mr. Schröder, whom polls tab as Germany's most popular politician and a handy winner by 61-31 per cent over the chancellor in a national opinion poll.

Mr. Kohl is ready to campaign this time on a platform pitching him as the man to help Germany make the transition from the German money, the mark, to the single European currency, the euro, and by extension to European unification.

Mr. Kohl's chances got a boost Friday when Germany resoundingly met the deficit criterion for the euro.

Mr. Schröder is dangerous for Mr. Kohl since he is a "New Labour" type politician, much in the mould of U.S. President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who count on a strong economy rather than government hand-outs to create jobs.

Mr. Schröder is the only major figure on the German left who can garner votes from across the political spectrum.

The last SPD chancellor was Helmut Schmidt, whom Mr. Kohl replaced 16 years ago.

ATO, pilots blamed for Philippine jet crash

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippines Air Transportation Office (ATO) and the pilots of a jetliner that crashed killing all 104 people on board were both at fault in the tragedy, an insurance investigator was reported saying Sunday.

"Based on our assessment, both ATO personnel and the pilots were at fault," in the Feb. 2 crash, said Captain Serafin San Gabriel, an executive of a local investigation arm of Lloyd's of London and other

international insurance companies.

Capt. Gabriel, president of the Aviation Survey Group Philippines Inc., said ATO personnel should have disapproved a change in the flight plan requested by the pilots which took them over a mountain "not covered by an airway," newspapers said.

He also said the pilots should not have made the request but "should have insisted on the safe route, the one with existing

airways."

The airline has maintained the ATO approved their request to make an unscheduled detour to Tacloban City en route to Cagayan de Oro to unload tools and a mechanic to fix another Cebu Pacific flight headed to Manila.

ATO officials have said the investigation into the crash of the Cebu Pacific Air DC-9, which slammed into a mountain in the southern Philippines, has yet to be completed.

Capt. Gabriel also cast doubt on reports that the flight data recorder, a crucial part of the investigation, is blank.

"I'm not buying that story," he said. If the recorder were blank it would cast a shadow over the safety measures of the airline, newspapers quoted him as saying.

"Granting that it's faulty, then the Cebu Pacific people should have fixed that first before allowing the plane to fly," he said.



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Hong Kong democracy groups allege police harassment, phone tapping

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong political protesters alleged Sunday that police were violating their privacy and human rights by tapping their telephones and harassing them after demonstrations.

Leung Kwok-hung, a spokesman for the activist "April 5th Movement" named after a 1979 pro-democracy demonstration in Beijing, told a forum on police harassment that on numerous occasions he had discussed protests with his colleagues over the telephone.

"We never staged the protests in the end, but the police called me up to ask me about them," Mr. Leung said, adding that after actual demonstrations he was often asked by police where he was going.

Relevant Hong Kong police could not be immediately reached for comment.

But Deputy Security Secretary Raymond Wong said last week: "Hong Kong peoples' freedom of assembly has not diminished in any way."

"The police have to strike a balance between the rights of the demonstrators to express their views and the need to maintain public safety and order and to ensure that no danger or inconvenience is caused to others," Mr. Wong said.

Human Rights observers said such police action raised serious questions about personal privacy.

"You can't protect the rights of a person whose phone is tapped because the person may not even know it," said Law Yuk-Kai, director of Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor.

Derry Wong, associate law professor at City University of Hong Kong, told the same forum that the police did not have the power to follow, harass or tap the telephones of protesters.

He said the situation was especially worrying because Hong Kong's police general order had no legal base.

"In countries such as Britain, the police general order has to pass through the legislative body, and if a policeman violates the order, he is violating the law. But in Hong Kong, a policeman that violates the order is merely in breach of his duty," Mr. Wong said.

"Under international human rights treaties, police are supposed to make sure that a protest can proceed peacefully. They should tell protesters the best way to go, not prevent them from marching, or follow them after the protest," he said.

The situation in Hong Kong is further complicated by the fact that there is no legal channel for redress in the face of such police actions, Mr. Wong added.

"If the police are following you, what are you going to do? Report it to the police?" he said.

Editors say Sri Lanka heading for police state

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's Editors' Guild Sunday warned of a drift towards a police state as authorities bowed to pressure and dropped plans to deport a Chinese journalist.

The guild said in a statement it was concerned with the growing use of "strong-arm tactics" against journalists and the "rapidly deteriorating climate for a free media."

The strongly-worded statement came as the police Criminal Investigations Department (CID) released Chinese journalist Jin Hui Saturday after detaining him overnight on a deportation order.

Mr. Jin, 26, the Colombo correspondent of Beijing's official Xinhua News Agency, was freed by Saturday afternoon and the deportation order withdrawn following intense diplomatic moves, official sources said.

It was the first deportation order against a journalist by the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga which came to power in 1994 promising greater press freedom.

Previous governments expelled several foreign correspondents and were severely criticised by international

rights organisations for curtailing media freedom.

The Editors' Guild listed several incidents of police harassment of journalists and said: "The guild is of the opinion that the ... incidents indicate a drift towards a police state, and that this government, unfortunately, is gaining currency as one that is becoming increasingly insensitive to media freedom."

Journalists here also express concern that in the case of the arrest of the Chinese journalist, the government's procedures in dealing with such situations had been violated.

Media Minister Mangala Samaraweera had earlier given assurances that no journalists would be arrested or searched without the presence of an information department or foreign ministry official.

Information Department Director Ariya Rubasinghe and foreign ministry spokesman Ravinath Ariyasinha said they were not informed of Jin's arrest shortly before midnight Friday.

Official sources said the authorities were angry over a report Mr. Jin had filed about the Tamil rebel attack last Monday on a sea convoy off the northern peninsula of Jaffna.

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Editorial and advertising offices:
 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
 Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585
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Future for common sense

IN A speech she delivered in Miami two days ago U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright did not only disclose that there was opposition, presumably American, to the accord signed between the U.N. and Iraq. When she cited elements who would rather bomb than talk, she probably was also justifying attempts to either rewrite the agreement or in fact adopt a new Security Council resolution that might undermine and contravene it.

We should give Ms. Albright high marks for understanding better than others in the administrations of U.S. President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair the pulse of the peoples and the governments worldwide. After a year in office, she is in a perfect position to know that the mood in the international community is against the resort to military force for settling the Iraqi or any other crisis. "I know that there are some who want to reject this agreement and start bombing tomorrow," the secretary of state said. "I don't think the majority of the American people want that. And I'm certain the world would neither understand nor accept it."

But since this has to be the case, why then push for the adoption of a new resolution by the Security Council which could take us back to the brink of war?

The kind of language that the British draft resolution submitted to the council a few days ago contains stipulations that are clearly absent from the original agreement. The introduction of unveiled threats to hit Iraq, upon determination by London and Washington of Iraqi non-compliance with the accord, obviously runs counter to the spirit and letter of the carefully brokered pact. Instead of promoting goodwill and ushering in a new era of cooperation with Iraq, Britain in particular is now desperately trying to inject new dimensions that could retard the cause of peace. Under these circumstances, there is ground to believe that the other permanent members of the council should perhaps veto the draft. The non-permanent members should likewise cast a negative vote against the text. As France and Russia have indicated, there is actually no pressing need for any resolution. The Baghdad agreement stands on its own as a viable and sound basis for conducting all future weapons inspections in Iraq. Why spoil the promising effort at its formative and crucial stage?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi Sunday said the Turkish initiative for peace among neighbours and a gradual restoration of good ties among them is worth praising because it aims at defusing tension and reconciling countries with long-standing enmity over the past decades. Ankara has displayed reservation with regard to Washington's threat of the use of force against Baghdad, it sent a special envoy to Iraq to mediate and try to reach a diplomatic solution to the crisis and initiated contacts with Damascus with the aim of reopening political dialogue with Syria, noted the writer. He said Turkey's foreign minister's visit to Amman also falls within the framework of Ankara's new initiative to achieve reconciliation among its neighbours. Turkey's initiative is worth considering by Iraq and Syria and the rest of the Arab countries because, said the writer, it aims at achieving regional security and designed to free the Middle East from mass destruction weapons. However, said the writer, what is expected from Turkey to achieve the aspired reconciliation with its neighbours is to stop sending troops to northern Iraq and reduce its military cooperation with Israel in order to defuse tension which is a first and important step towards achieving the aspired reconciliation.

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh called on the government to try to understand the reasons behind the demonstrations staged by the people of Ma'an in the past weeks. He said the people of Ma'an were not instigated by any person but rather by the massing of U.S. forces for launching aggression on Iraq. He said the Ma'an people own a huge fleet of trucks which they use to transport goods between Jordan and Iraq, and as they have no other means of income, their livelihoods will be seriously threatened should the Americans launch war on Iraq. The writer said the people of Ma'an are very intelligent and would in no way allow a single person to spur them into staging protests, but their national sense and their fear for their means of livelihood prompted them to march in protest against the looming American danger. He said the Jordanian government spends JD20 million annually on its information services trying to convince the public of its policies and therefore it is not possible for a single person to instigate the whole population of Ma'an to cause trouble for the government or harm the country's security and stability.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Jordan's regional trade bias

EVERY TIME Jordan moves towards signing a free trade agreement with a major trading block or a Western country, its critics point elsewhere to the Arab World. Jordanians are constantly reminded and even chided that their first and foremost responsibility lies east, somewhere in the Arab fold, in establishing trading partners. Jordan is even blamed for not having established a free trade area in the Arab World, as if Jordan (which has championed this notion from the start) has it within its powers to determine the flows and types of trade in the region. Trade figures vindicate Jordan and underscore that, when it comes to trade with its brethren, it has done more than its fair share. In fact, as a per cent of total trade, Jordanian exports to the Arab World have increased in recent years.

Jordan's total exports averaged about 24 per cent of GDP between 1995-97. After a strong growth of over 24 per cent in 1995, the growth declined 2.4 per cent and 2.3 per cent in 1996 and 1997, respectively. Concomitantly, Jordan's exports to Arab countries increased from JD451.6 million in 1995 to JD485.3 million in 1996, or 48 per cent of total exports, thus registering a 7.5 per cent increase, with chemicals representing JD152.1 million or 31 per cent of exports to Arab countries. In 1997 Jordan's exports to Arab countries accounted for 51.5 per cent of its total exports, reflecting an average growth rate of exports to the Arab World of 15 per cent, while the growth of exports over the same period was 10.9 per cent. Jordan's exports in 1997 can be

divided into three main categories: the traditional exports (25.9 per cent) of phosphates, potash, and fertiliser; the non-traditional exports (56.1 per cent) of fruits, vegetables, manufactured goods, and chemicals; and re-exports (18 per cent). Traditional exports are directed at international markets, particularly India, China and Japan, while non-traditional exports and re-exports are mainly directed at regional trading partners. Thus, the majority of Jordan's exports go to the Arab World.

Imports in 1997 comprised several important categories: food and live animals (18 per cent), petroleum (14 per cent), machinery and transport equipment (28 per cent) and manufactured goods (15 per cent). Jordan's total imports averaged 54 per cent of GDP over 1995-97, with imports growing by almost 13 per cent in 1995-96 and then falling by 6 per cent in 1997. Imports from Arab countries increased from JD608.5 million in 1995 to JD761.8 million in 1996, thus registering a 25.2 per cent increase with petroleum and its by-products occupying first place. In 1997, imports from regional trading partners took second place in terms of size, accounting for 25 per cent of total imports. [In first place was the EU at 35 per cent, the U.S. and Japan took third and fourth places at 8 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively. Thus, not only does Jordan have a sizeable chunk of its trade being conducted with Arab countries (six times the estimated size of the overall inter-Arab trade (8 per cent)), it has a trade deficit with the Arab World that continues to rise.

ues to rise.

As far as trade with Iraq is concerned, exports fell from \$400 million in 1995 to \$400 million (14 per cent of total exports) in 1997 due to the tightening of the U.N.-imposed sanctions. Of course, Jordan has limited control over what it can export to Iraq because of the special trade arrangement brokered by the U.N. under the oil-for-food compromise.

Furthermore, Jordan has taken steps to create one of the most open economies in the region. Among these measures was the introduction of reforms to the trading system: reduced the dispersion of tariff rates to six bands; reduced the highest tariff to 40 per cent; and consolidated several import surcharges into the tariff structure. The average tariff has been reduced to 16.8 per cent with tariffs on capital and intermediate goods falling to 11.1 per cent and 17.4 per cent, respectively.

Clearly, Jordan has practised what it preached. Its commitment to regional cooperation and trade, particularly with its Arab brethren has been remarkable and deserves recognition. And in spite of the fact that reliance on regional trade is probably not in Jordan's best interest because of the volatility of the region, advocates of free Arab trade should not preach to Jordan; it is already doing more than its share. Also, critics — especially from other Arab countries — should always remember the famous adage: If your house is made of glass do not throw rocks at others.

'The great Israel land grab'

Salman Abu-Sitta

"THE GREAT Israel land grab is not a headline of a Palestinian newspaper or a title of a Palestinian memorandum to the U.N. It is the headline of an article published by the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz on Feb. 1, 1998 and decrying the riches which have been amassed by Israeli farmers who sell Palestinian land. Israel is now embarking on a dangerous and far-reaching plan to sell to Jewish individuals Palestinian land from which the owners were uprooted and made refugees ever since. This plan would put obstacles in the path of their return. Although these obstacles can be removed, it would make the task technically harder.

Imagine tenants living in a large apartment building and paying very low rent. The undertaker of the building proposes to each tenant that, since the undertaker made sure the owner is kept away and will not be allowed to return, the keeper and the tenant would share the apartments between them. Each tenant would be allowed to register in his own name 25 per cent of the apartment against compensation provided that he forfeits the right to the lease of the rest for the undertaker's own use and sale. What would you call this? Plain robbery and fraud. Unfortunately this could work as long as the owner is kept a refugee abroad. That is what Israel's policy was and is today.

For 50 years, Israel kept the Palestinian land it took by force in 1948 (18,643 sq. km out of 20,325 sq. km., or 92 per cent of Israel's area) under the Custodian of the Absentee (Landowners) Property. Through a legal maze designed to remove the accusation of land robbery and the responsibility before international law, the Custodian transferred this property to a "Development Authority" which can exploit the land to the benefit of Jews only, even though they may not be residents of Israel. In an agreement between the government of Israel and the Jewish National Fund (JNF),

Palestinian land and JNF holdings are to be administered by Israel Land Administration (ILA) under JNF rules, i.e., exploitation by Jews only. The great majority of Palestinian land is leased to the Kibbutz and Moshav for 49 years (i.e., expiry date is 1998). The Israeli "farmers" number today about 154,000 Jews (2.7 per cent of Israel's population) and control the land of 4,500,000 refugees.

In the period 1948-1967, Israel left these lands with minimum interference pending the peace settlement with the Arabs. Following the 1967 war, Israel felt emboldened and introduced a strata of laws (e.g., expropriating "mawat" land as state land) which made the recovery of these lands more difficult according to Israeli law.

Now, with the ill-fated Oslo agreement and the evident weakness of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a frenzy of land grabbing, engineered by Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan, using the vehicles of the Ministry of National Infrastructures and Ministry of Agriculture started in earnest.

With the abject failure of the Kibbutz, as an ideology and an economic engine, Kibbutz farmers were allowed to own and build on a portion of the land leased to them. In return for the use of "their land," they would be compensated generously for not less than 20 per cent of this land.

Ordinance 533, later replaced by 611, which was enacted when Sharon was minister of housing, gave the farmers the best deal. As Russian immigrants began pouring in, housing was needed, and it was convenient to direct them to the near-empty Southern District and mainly-Arab Northern District.

The farmers were given an extra incentive. They were allowed to buy back the land for 15 per cent of the compensation value they received for it. They were thus transformed from bankrupt farmers with outdated ideology to rich "farmers" who owned a lot of real estate.

The sudden wealth of the farmers aroused criticism of old Zionists, such as the JNF, who insisted that Palestinian land should be the property of "the Jewish people everywhere in perpetuity." Sale to individuals, they say, may encourage some to sell land back to Arabs. Recently, Jewish extremists at Lydda terrorised a Jewish neighbour who sold his villa to a Palestinian Israeli family.

To resolve this dispute, a series of ordinances were passed (640 and 727) and finally a committee headed by Prof. Boaz Ronen was formed to determine the land percentage, the mechanism and procedure of selling Palestinian land leased by the ILA to Kibbutz farmers. In June 1997, the recommendations of the committee were approved to the obvious pleasure of Sharon. As a result, "ownership" of 600,000 apartments shall be transferred from the State Custodian to the tenants.

The Israeli government, through ILA, earned \$700 million in 1997 alone for its share in the proceedings. (This sale of a small portion of Palestinian land shows the fallacy of Israel's argument that the whole of Palestinian land and property are not worth more than \$300 million if compensation is to be paid).

In 1997, National Infrastructure Minister Sharon planned to build 50,000 housing units — 30,000 have been sold, 3,310 remain unsold, the rest is in various stages of tendering. It is noteworthy that the first stage of construction is designed to break the Palestinian monolithic continuity in Israel by building around Arab towns such as Umm Al Fahm, Nazareth, Shafa Amr and Taibah.

Moreover, construction of the long-planned 300-km \$2 billion Trans-Israel Highway shall start soon. In February 1998, a contract was signed with a large Canadian-Israeli consortium to build it. This highway runs inland parallel to the coast. It starts in Galilee and ends in Beer Sheva. It cuts across the Palestinian population concentrations in Galilee, the Little

Triangle and Negev. It is part of the "Star" plan concocted by Sharon to break and expropriate Arab lands, to prevent Israel's return to the 1967 Armistice Line and to provide housing for Russian immigrants in Arab areas in Israel.

All these activities are contrary to international law. Property of "Absentee" (i.e., expelled) owners should not be fragmented or sold to Jews anywhere in the world (i.e. to all those to whom the (Israeli) Law of Return applies). It should remain in custody as the property of all those to whom the (Palestinian) Right of Return applies.

In order to prevent this plain unabashed robbery of property-in-custody, the U.N. should send a commission to Israel. Bodies such as the U.N. Palestine Solidarity Committee, and the Arab League, and last but not least Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) should press for its formation. The mandate for this commission could be:

1. To determine and document the present status of Palestinian land (Israel minus Jewish land in 1948).
2. To obtain copies of all records of Palestinian land kept by the ILA (the purchase, ownership and registration division and the information division, database).
3. To recommend to the U.N. the appointment of a Custodian of Palestinian Land and to propose measures to prevent its unlawful disposition.

Such a custodian has already been proposed at the U.N. when Jarvis, the Land Expert of the Conciliation Commission on Palestine, presented his documentation of Palestinian property in 1964. There are many other similar precedents. It behooves the Arabs, and particularly PLO and PNA, to take action now at a time when the World Jewish Restitution Organisation is whipping European countries to recover and repossess (not compensate for) Jewish property in Europe without as much as the benefit of one of a pile of U.N. resolutions which the Palestinians have in their favour.

Human Rights File

Security Council resolutions subject of judicial review

By W.M. Sadi

THANK GOD the nightmare over the Iraqi crisis is nearly over. What remains is to take stock of the clumsy way the crisis was handled. The immediate problem now is what to do with hundreds of war planes and ships and thousands of U.S. and British soldiers stranded in the middle of nowhere with no precise mission. Their continued mobilisation could wreak havoc with the economies of both countries. At the same time neither Washington nor London can make claims on the international community to foot the bill of their huge military mobilisation since neither the U.N. Security Council nor the U.N. General Assembly had authorised such military manoeuvres. Not even the immediate neighbours of Iraq on whose behalf these military forces were allegedly assembled requested this military intervention. Now it seems the American and British taxpayers will have to bear the colossal costs of the military preparedness in the Gulf region simply because their respective governments did what they did all wrong.

In retrospect both the actions of the U.S. and the U.K. showed them as amateur, politically as well as economically. The international community was expecting a better and a more sophisticated display of diplomacy by the two major powers in order to set fine examples to all other nations in the face of conflicts or disputes. The first cardinal error committed by both countries was to try to implement legitimacy through illegitimate ways. The U.N. member states would have hoped that both countries would seek authorisation from the international community before embarking on a military adventure against a Third World country if for no reason other than to have their expenses covered at least. Even this much the two governments neglected to do, something which could be damaging for them on their respective local levels when the times comes to account for their actions.

The next order of business in the wake of the "agreement" brokered by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan is to decide on follow up policies or measures. One thing is sure: The crisis is far from over. The continued presence of the U.S. and U.K. war machines in the area attest to this fact. If anything, the U.S. is still beefing up its forces since it does not really know what to do next. The momentum of U.S. and U.K. military build-up in the Gulf has yet to be arrested or reversed. Mr. Annan's deal effectively pulled the rug from under the feet of Washington and London after having placed all their bets on the failure of the U.N. secretary general's mission to Baghdad. Deep in their hearts, both President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair may have felt that Annan's successful diplomacy cheated them out of their military option in which they invested so heavily both politically and materially.

The U.S. and U.K. are now trying to cut their losses and reduce the damaging fallout from the Annan-Aziz memorandum of understanding (MOU), by pleading the argument that testing the sincerity of the Iraqi regime in complying with the terms of MOU would require the continued presence of their armies, navies and air forces. It is conceivable but not likely that Baghdad may still renege on its commitments. Still, there are problems and controversies which could surface along the way especially where there are "loopholes" in the text of the "agreement" decided upon in Baghdad. From strictly drafting points of view, the draft leaves much to be desired. Many grey areas were left in the draft. Perhaps the ambiguities of the text were left there on purpose to give the two sides room for manoeuvring. From Iraq's point of view, the issue of sanctions is left hanging in the middle of nowhere with no clear-cut commitment to have them lifted in due course. From the U.S. point of view, the provision calling for the conduct of the weapons inspection mission with due regard to Iraq's national security, sovereignty and dignity sensitivities may prove to be more problematic than originally thought. Perhaps these uncertainties have prompted Washington and London to push for a Security Council resolution dependent on the "agreement" but more fully articulated to deal with all contingencies. But by trying to go beyond the gist of the accord and calling for an automatic unleashing of a military intervention should Iraq veer away from the pact, the two capitals are understandably courting problems and opposition from the other members of the Council.

Yet in the final analysis what counts most is the political resolution of the Iraqi file altogether. In his interview with Orbit Television and Radio Satellite Network last week, His Majesty King Hussein called for a dialogue between Baghdad and Washington in a bid to settle the Iraqi conflict in all its aspects. As far-fetched as this idea may appear for the time being, it offers the only effective way out of the cycle of crises over the Iraqi situation. Even though American-Iraqi relations seem now to be irredeemable they are not by all means beyond the rehabilitation point. Remember, not so far in the distant past Baghdad and Washington were on the best of terms.

From the human rights perspective, whatever the Security Council decides, it must keep in mind the dictates of international law especially international human rights law. The council is not free to chart a course that violates international human rights instruments. The council appears to be so intoxicated with its powers that it has become oblivious to the limitations imposed by international law on its actions. The recent decision of the International Court of Justice that the council's resolution on the Lockerbie case is not immune from judicial accountability. The U.N. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) had also admonished the council against adopting resolutions that run counter to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In due course other international fora would do the same. The Committee of Human Rights which monitors the application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights can be expected to follow in the footsteps of CESCR. The human rights body on the rights of the child could be the next to be seized with Security Council resolutions impugning on the rights of the child anywhere in the world including Iraq, Libya and Sudan. The moral of the story is that the council's resolutions are now subject to judicial reviews and the sooner the council members become aware of this accountability, the better it would be to international peace and the new international order.

Turning back nature, on the battlefield of Petra's stone facades

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

ONE OF the greatest battles that defines historical time is that between nature and nature itself — between the enduring strength of natural rock, on the one hand, and the weathering, eroding impact of water, wind, sand, time, and other factors, on the other. In this epic, eternal war, a fascinating battle is taking place in Jordan — at monument 825 at Petra, to be more precise — pitting mother nature against a joint Jordanian-German team of specialists determined to stop nature dead in its tracks.

Working painstakingly behind a scaffolding wall covering the entire facade of the monument, the Jordanian-German team is mustering the combined power of human will and technical knowledge in order not only to stop further natural deterioration of the tomb facade — but also to reverse existing damage by using a manufactured mortar that almost perfectly mimics the feel, look, and behaviour of the natural sandstone.

This audacious, exciting work could have major implications for other antiquities sites in Jordan and the wider Middle East, given the project's aim of establishing a permanent centre for stone conservation to serve Jordan and perhaps others in the region. The work is being undertaken by the project to establish a Conservation and Restoration Centre in Petra (CARCIP), directed by Helge H. Fischer, funded primarily by German Technical Assistance (GTZ), and involving cooperation and institution building among the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, Yarmouk University, Hashemite University and other institutions. The CARCIP project is being implemented under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan.

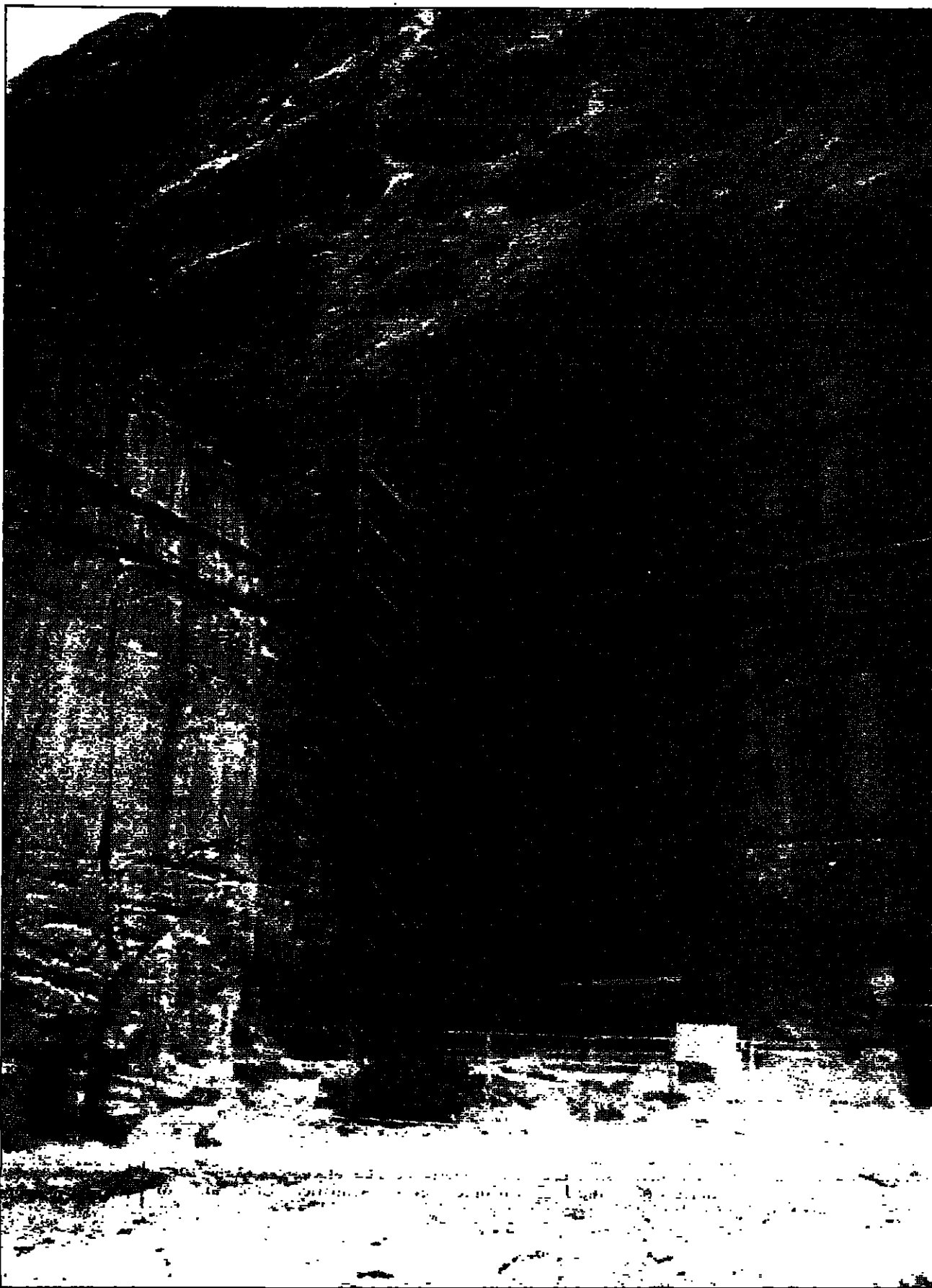
Three years of patient preparatory work had to take place before the actual restoration work started late last year on monument 825, also called the Tomb of the Eleven Graves (you pass the tomb to your right just before reaching the theatre, as you walk into Petra along the Outer Stij). Similar restoration work has started at the Turkmaniyya Tomb in the northern part of the Petra basin, whose facade has the longest known Nabataean inscription and is thought to be in danger of imminent collapse. The work has been facilitated by the involvement of a skilled German master stone mason, Egon Kaiser, who spends several months per year in Petra and in his laboratories in Germany working on various aspects of the Petra project. The artist and craftsman in him allows him to recreate the tools and techniques that the Nabataeans used; the scientist in him allows him to develop the rose-red-coloured sandstone mortar now being used to fill in gaps and cracks, rebuild broken bits of sculpted rock, and strengthen vulnerable parts of the two monuments under scaffolding.

"Restoration work at a world heritage site cannot be compared to normal construction," Mr. Fischer said in an interview with the Jordan Times in Petra recently. "It is a highly sensitive issue that requires utmost care and preparation, for every single step needs to be carefully planned, justified, documented, pre-tested, and monitored."

The delicate work under way at Petra conforms to the highest international standards and guidelines for conservation and restoration of cultural monuments. Backup technical support is also provided by the Bavarian State Conservation Office, the leading German body in this field.

Because the methods, materials and procedures now being applied to the two monuments had never before been attempted at Petra, the project team had to simultaneously undertake two key tasks — train a complete Jordanian staff of specialists and workmen, and develop the appropriate materials, techniques and strategies for the actual conservation and restoration. The training of Jordanians is an essential aim of the CARCIP project, which will eventually result in the establishment of a semi-independent centre at Petra capable of fully responding to Jordanian stone conservation needs in the future. The project has trained three senior Jordanian staff: archaeologist-architect May Sha'er, architect Zaki Aslan, and Yarmouk University geologist Mustafa Nadaf. Nearly a dozen skilled workers from Petra have also been trained to erect the scaffolding, mix and apply the mortar, cut stones, and chisel the final surface of the newly applied mortar or stones.

The government has provided a piece of land for the permanent centre, and plans for the building are ready; construction is expected to start this year. Also ongoing is the



The scaffolding covering the front of Tomb 825 at Petra provides close access to every part of the facade.

formulation of a new administrative structure for the centre so that it enjoys maximum flexibility and efficiency; options being explored include a totally independent non-governmental organisation, a unit linked to a university, or a semi-independent centre affiliated with a para-state body such as the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

Careful preparation

The preparatory steps during the first three years of the project included the following main tasks: a) the elaboration of a restoration concept comprising goals, materials, procedures, and techniques that maximise the use of original construction materials and methods, and in a reversible manner; b) making the monument accessible for close inspection and work by constructing a coated steel scaffolding, which was erected by locally trained men from the Bedul tribe at Petra; c) architecturally surveying the monument manually and with electronic equipment; d) assessing the existing damage to the monument via a comprehensive surface analysis and documentation, and determining the causes of the observed deterioration; e) architecturally investigating the monument's construction marks in order to determine the original construction techniques; f) lithological and petrological investigation, including simulations, in order to develop mortars that are compatible with the natural rock properties (i.e., strength, porosity, permeability, composition, hardness, salt content and distribution); g) producing original mortars and rock substitutes, using original rock components from a nearby quarry, and subjecting this artificial material to tests and long-term observation; h) elaborating a working plan with detailed maps indicating all individual measures to be taken on every part of the monument; and, i) implementing the actual restoration, starting with monitored trial applications on less obvious parts of the monument as a final precautionary check on how the newly developed mortar and other materials will behave when applied to the original stone facade. The ongoing work is also constantly documented and archived for future use in various forms (photographs, text, computer images).

Perhaps the most exciting part of the work is to be able to walk on the scaffolding directly in front of the facade at all levels of the monument's height, and to examine at eyeball range both the nature of the rock deterioration over time and the original construction techniques. Mr. Fischer and his team have identified nearly 30 different causes of damage to the facade of monument 825, such as flaking, pitting, salt crusting, vegetation, bird droppings, paint, cracking, faulting, plaster detachment or mortar disintegration. Among the techniques being used to correct these problems are filling with mortar, injection or application of a stone strengthener, remodeling architectural forms, mortar patching, inserting stones, cleaning or removing materials, and replacing stone inserts.

New insights

The close-up inspection of the rock has resulted in new insights into Nabataean construction methods. Traces of the original lines for stone carving have been found in some places, and in others the project crew found scratched into the monument facade miniature profiles of the full-size cornices that were carved into the facades. The carved scale cornices measure around 30-40 centimetres high in most cases, and were clearly drawn near the level of the real cornice to help the stone masons achieve their goals. In some cases, Mr. Kaiser said, the Nabataean stone masons made some mistakes in translating the miniature-scale cornice profile into the real thing, and there is evidence that they used small cut stones or mortar filling to patch up mistakes in the carving. There is also some evidence of changes in design during the carving of the facades, either due to mistakes or simply for aesthetic reasons.

The close-up inspection of the facades also revealed many built-up elements constructed of cut stones, including parts of cornices, capitals, columns, and friezes; some were held in place with stone jambs, and others were cemented or mortared in place. Cracks, collapsed rock, and other stone deterioration in antiquity were also plugged up and repaired in Nabataean times, using stone, mortar, pieces of wood, and other available technologies. Most such repairs

were rather small, and were not visible to people walking in front of the monuments at ground level — which is why they have also not been seen by many scholars who have studied the monuments from ground level.

The close-up study of the Turkmaniyya tomb has revealed that the missing bottom of the facade had actually broken off in antiquity, and not after the Nabataean era as had been generally thought. It has been discovered that the missing bottom portion of the facade beneath the inscription had been built up with cut stones in Nabataean times, so the breaking off of the bottom half of the tomb facade must have occurred during the tomb construction or earlier.

An important discovery was a pattern of rock-cut channels above and along the sides of the monuments; the channels allowed rain water to run off without cascading down the facades, thus protecting the monuments from erosion. (A similar system of cut channels for run-off water was discovered eight years ago above Petra's theatre, and served the same purpose). This protection system preserved the basic integrity of the rock facades as well as the finer painted plaster layers that covered most or perhaps all Nabataean monuments. More evidence of plastered and painted facades has been documented by this project, complementing similar discoveries from earlier scholarly investigations by other teams.

One of the first, easiest, most effective, and cheapest recommendations already emerging from the work to date, Mr. Fischer said, is to restore the water-channel-based protective systems of as many tombs as possible. That simple process — often requiring only cleaning out clogged channels — would do much to protect the tomb facades in coming centuries.

'Reading' the monuments

Mr. Kaiser said that one of the most fascinating aspects of the work for him was "the fact that I could spend time studying the facades close-up, reading each monument like a book, and in the process discovering how the Nabataean stone masons went about their work."

He said the Nabataeans used many different stone-carving methods and tools, due to the different kinds of stone and the varying nature and sizes of monument. He lauded the project's ample time to study the original facades and carry out tests

on the mortar that is being used to repair the monuments."

We have applied a very sound concept of conservation and restoration that is based on having sufficient time to test and confirm every step in the process, before the next step is started, so that the final work will be aesthetically and technically sound."

Mr. Fischer added that this is particularly important for a UNESCO World Heritage site such as Petra. The project used part of an ancient Nabataean quarry in the isolated northern part of the site, not far from Umm Saihoun village on the road to Beidha, to test chiseling techniques, mortars, and surface treatments of the rock. A series of small test holes drilled in the natural stone was used to try out a variety of mortars and to confirm the strength, absorption rates, porosity, and other qualities of the rock. The tests allowed Mr. Kaiser to come up with what is called a 'silicasol repair mortar' — an artificial sandstone without the sedimentation. When it is applied to the natural rock and dries hard within a few days, it looks, feels, flakes and weathers just like the original stone. It can plug large or small holes, be shaped into architectural elements, or be spread across the surface like plaster. It is designed to be slightly weaker than the original stone, so that in the long term it weathers a bit faster than the natural rock and does not protrude beyond the rest of the facade in the case of swift weathering of the natural rock. The bulk of the restoration work involves filling in gaps and cracks in the rock using the specially designed mortar, which is mixed on site using local ingredients and chemicals imported from Germany. The team is also injecting strengthening materials into facades in cases where they have identified cavities within the natural rock. Stone insets are added to facades where the profile of a cornice needs to be reconstructed, whether for aesthetic reasons or, more importantly, to protect the lower levels of the facade from rainwater runoff.

One of the big challenges facing the project team is the very different humidity levels within the same monument, since humidity variations will lead to different rates of salt accumulation, flaking and cracking or breaking of the facade. Since the tomb facades are almost totally carved from the natural rock face, conservation possibilities are more restricted than on totally built structures.

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Minimum 15 years' experience in the capacity of testing/commissioning engineer for HV/EHV GIS Substations out of which at least 5 years must be in managerial capacity leading the testing/commissioning Engineers Group. Knowledge of HV/EHV GIS & Transformer protection is essential. In depth and upto date knowledge of IEC and other relevant international standards is a must. Must have background of quality assurance for HV/EHV GIS/Transformers in a factory and should have participated in final testing of related equipment in works. Also essential to investigate faults for different types of GIS and other equipments associated with 400/32/33KV substations. HV laboratory testing of GIS. Application of condition monitoring methods (P.D. Tangents Delta, Gas, SF₆, Density, Trafo Oil Characterizing, Gas Analysis). Testing & commissioning of GIS & 11KV switchgear at site. Troubleshooting and cause analysis. Managerial experience. Attractive salary will be offered based on qualification and experience.

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GROSS SALARY:

Dh.7,400/- p.m. (Married)
Dh.6,900/- p.m. (Single)

Degree in Electrical Engineering

Minimum 18 years' experience in the relevant field. Supervise engineers and staff for protection & commissioning work. Planning of spares procurement, equipment, etc. Guide engineers and Technicians to carry out routine maintenance and pre-commissioning test, in high voltage system relays, instruments and protection equipments. Checking of protection scheme, protection drawing submitted by the contractor and give its approval to the planning department. Scrutiny of protection report and give its comments. Investigation of protection tripping and its testing, commissioning of high voltage protection equipment and metering circuits. Inspection of protection and metering equipment at site and factory. Attending emergency and co-ordinate the work. Wherever necessary, attend all sectional routine, stores, procurements of spares, staff control, etc. Should be computer literate. UAE driving licence preferable.

Applications (with copies of education and experience certificates) should be marked/faxed to the Administration & Personnel Department of Dubai Electricity & Water Authority, P.O. Box 564, Dubai, Fax: 348111/344427, within ten days of this advertisement. A recent passport size photograph and a photocopy of the passport should be attached. Telephone contact, Fax No. and cable address, if any, should be furnished.

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Minimum 15 years' comprehensive manufacturing experience of which at least 7 years should be with a utility company similar to DEWA. Should be conversant with procedures/tests for the maintenance/repairs of medium voltage transformers, circuit breakers, ring main units, distribution boards, etc. used in the distribution networks. Should be well experienced in investigating faults for different types of distribution equipments associated with 33/11/6.6KV substations. The incumbent will be primarily responsible for the meticulous maintenance of all distribution equipments in the 33/11KV substations. Attractive salary will be offered based on qualification and experience.

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Minimum 10 years' experience in training and career development field, preferably in an electrical utility. Broad inter-disciplinary technical and engineering knowledge, exceptional interpersonal and communication skills with ability to relate to all levels of employees. Respect and maintenance of mutual confidentiality and integrity during counselling. Creation, co-ordination and monitoring of a career development system for UAE nationals.

Attractive remuneration packages will be offered.

Spectre of OPEC collapse looms as prices crumble

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The spectre of OPEC's collapse is looming once again and the sharp slide in prices could pave the way for a smaller cartel of Gulf oil heavyweights.

The 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has been a helpless bystander as the price slide over the past two months eats into its already ailing coffers.

The crux of the problem is once again the cartel's irremediable illness: Excessive supplies due to quota violations.

"The recent developments lead me to ask: is this the beginning of the

end for OPEC?" said an oil executive who is close to Gulf governments.

"OPEC was created at the initiative of Venezuela and I am afraid this country could be the cause of OPEC's collapse."

Independent estimates show Venezuela has been pumping more than 800,000 barrels per day (bpd) above its OPEC-decreed quota of 2.58 million bpd.

The Latin American country has ruled out any cut in its production as it presses ahead with projects to raise its output capacity.

Experts said Venezuela's decision to

let foreign firms into its upstream sector over past years, its purchase of more refineries and petrol stations in that region, and other local factors meant the country would no longer heed the longstanding quota system in the 38-year-old OPEC.

Its overproduction has combined with quota violations by Nigeria, Qatar and other members to boost OPEC's overall output to more than 28 million bpd, compared with an official ceiling of 27.5 million bpd.

Some member states, in contrast, have not been able to meet their quotas.

But the overall surplus has contributed along with the Asian financial crisis and a mild winter in the northern hemisphere to cut crude prices to one of their lowest levels since their collapse to nearly \$10 a barrel in 1988.

A loss of around \$6 in prices over the past four months has cost the cartel more than \$20 billion, according to oil analysts.

Prices, which have hit

four-year lows of less than \$14 a barrel, could further plunge as Western consumers continue to increase their crude stocks because of cheap prices and the warm weather in the northern hemisphere.

"Without output reductions by OPEC, prices will surely come under more pressure in the coming weeks as seasonal demand will start to climb down and foreign companies will

sell part of their stocks," an oil expert said.

"I think it has now become a legitimate question by some members about the logic of remaining in OPEC without any benefits."

"This could prompt more members to follow the example of Gabon and Ecuador and pull out, leaving a smaller version of OPEC probably encompassing Gulf producers."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MARCH 2, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You're liable to run into a massive breakdown in the middle of the day. It could be a friend's problem more than your own. Go ahead and bail this person, who has been dependable in the past, out of the jam. The odds are good he or she will be dependable again in the future.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're incredibly lucky this morning. A comment you make to a friend about something you want could actually come true. It's sort of like having three wishes. Remember that if you're asking for things. Don't request something you don't want — you might get that, too.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Encourage an influential older person to talk about hopes and dreams. The more you understand, the better you'll be able to plot your own course wisely. Promise to keep what you hear in the strictest confidence, of course; and keep your word about that.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) A hunch you get before noon should be right on target. In the middle of the day, stay out of a conflict between your friend and his or her employer. There simply isn't much you can do. It's a decision your friend's going to have to make. Don't worry about it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you want to make more money on your job, help your boss figure out how to pay you. Once the money is there, it'll be an easy transition from his or her pocket into yours. Meanwhile, if you need help getting a loan, that same person is the best one to ask.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're very lucky today and tomorrow, but conditions will be changing after that. There's nothing to get alarmed about. It's just that you'll have to work a little harder for what you get. Right now, the tide is in your favour. That's true with romance, too. Don't procrastinate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You may feel like your work is more of a burden than a joy. No point in complaining. You need the money. Instead of making a fuss, remember when you simply wished you had a job. If you don't have a job, your best time to find one is this morning. There'll be a test, but you'll do fine.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) First thing this morning will be very romantic. The middle of the day is more upsetting. A breakdown requires a decision. Should you fix the thing or buy a new one? If it isn't what you've always wanted, toss it. The evening is good for love again. Your plans are developing nicely.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The job you're facing today is difficult, but don't worry about it. Because of it, you'll be able to attain something you want for your home. If you're thinking about buying a home, start studying. Set up a consultation with an expert for tomorrow.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're in advanced learning mode right now. You're figuring out how to do things you previously thought were impossible. Isn't it fun? You're also very attractive to a person you admire a lot. Make a commitment this evening. It's a sure bet.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're very smart, but sometimes you forget about material things, such as food and shelter. Establish a routine that will support you in achieving your goals. An expenditure is required, but don't worry. It'll be a good investment.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Sometimes you find it difficult to stick to a subject. Today, that won't be a problem. You'll be able to focus your attention for hours at a time. That's important, because you could run into a rather complicated situation. You'll have it solved before dinner.

Birthstones of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

JORDAN TIMES
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GALLERIA
هاتف ٧٩٣٣٤٣٠

VOLCANO
التجم العالمي لنيكولاس كيج
Honey Moon in Vegas

3:30 / 6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30
6:30 / 8:30 / 10:30

3:30 الساعة HIGH SCHOOL HIGH ويعرض فيلم
تقريبا... تقريباً... تقريباً... تقريباً

TITANIC

WINGS CLUB

Grand Treasure Hunt

Visit the Wings Club Piano Bar and WIN:

- 1 round-trip for two to any European destination served by Lufthansa
- 2 free weekends for two at the Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba
- 3 free dinners for two at the Royal Club Restaurant

Ask for your registration card between 27/02 - 31/03
One card for every drink ordered!

Simply fill out the answer (somewhere displayed in the bar) to the Grand Treasure Hunt question and drop your registration card in the raffle box on the bar counter. Grand Draw - 1 April, 1998-8:00pm.

Radisson SAS **Lufthansa**

Wings Club Piano Bar - Radisson SAS Hotel Amman (former Philadelphia Hotel)
Tel. 06 5607100 - Fax: 06 5665160

Starting 31 March, 1998 - Lufthansa German Airlines - 3 flights/week

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

THSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS

- Warm in advance
- Secret plotters
- Steve Martin film of 1987
- Heart of Dixie state
- Went past
- Rolling pastry loaf
- Regardless of
- Most pungent
- Simple bed
- End of an
- Kidnappers' demand
- Share freely
- Novelist Hunter
- Opening remark
- Anna Sten film
- Claus
- Coffin holder
- Scalper
- Approximately
- More crafty
- Golda Meir's nation
- Hit head-on
- Soak (up)
- Nobility
- Critters
- Drum beat
- Fronts
- Quarantine
- Essential part
- Very beginnings
- Holds a grudge

DOWN

- God
- Wander from place to place
- Former spouses
- Heavenly instrument
- Singer Caruso
- Expert on bodily structure
- Doctrine
- Hindu social grouping
- Table in a temple
- Heavy curtain of artillery fire
- Border (on)

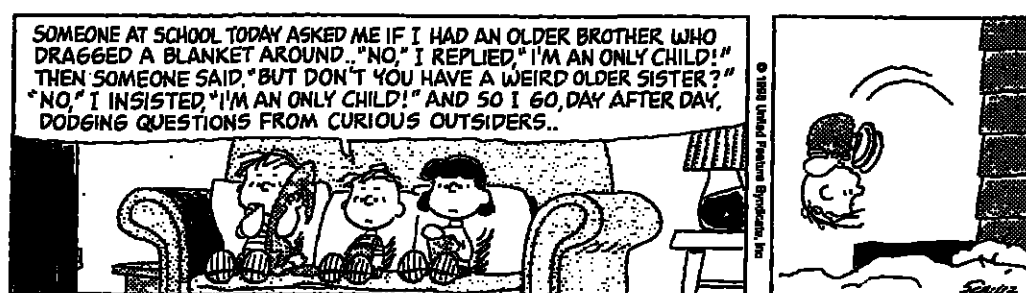
By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

Friday's Puzzle Solved

O	M	E	N	E	L	A	N	D	S	I	G	H
T	O	R	E	N	I	M	O	Y	I	S	E	E
T	W	O	E	G	S	O	V	E	R	E	A	S
O	S	S	L	I	P	S	O	R	A	T	E	
B	I	M	S	S	C	A	R	C	E	R		
S	T	R	O	B	E	U	H	U	R	A		
A	R	E	A	S	N	A	R	E	S	O	T	
T	O	A	S	H	A	S	B	R	O	W	N	S
E	N	D	R	A	V	E	S	R	I	T	A	
T	O	L	E	R	E	N	A	M	O	R		
S	T	R	I	P	E	S	S	P	A	N		
C	O	A	T	I		S	O	O	T			
A	N	D	A	C	U	P	O	F	O	R	E	E
M	E	I	N		S	A	R	A	H	R	O	A
P	R	O	S		E	W	E	R	S	O	S	L

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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CHOVA

LIVIG

GUNSLY

RAMPUK

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: () () () () () () () ()

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: KETCH OBESE BRAZEN PUSHER
Answer: An ambitious ballerina must always do this — BE ON HER TOES

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

13 international companies submit offers to sell 33% of government stake in cement firm

**** OUT OF 21 international companies** contacted to bid for working as financial consultants to two Jordanian firms, 13 companies submitted offers to perform such a task to sell 33 per cent of government shares in the Jordan Cement Factories Company Ltd. The interest among the international companies was extremely low with regard to the second firm as only two companies submitted offers to act as a financial consultant to privatise the National Petroleum Company.

The government's 33 per cent stake on offer for sale to a strategic partner is estimated at \$100 million and the shares may be floated in international bourses such as London and Luxembourg. The consultant was offered \$100,000 for managing the sale but despite the low amount, the number of bids received, highlights the level of competition among the international companies to manage the sale of government shares in the cement firm.

The Jordan Cement Factories Company Ltd. enjoys a concession until the year 2001 but the Jordan Investment Corporation assured the international companies, which requested clarification in this regard, that there is no intention to renew the concession agreement. The corporation is the government arm that looks after state investments. The Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC), which promotes investments in Jordan, said that raising the stake of the strategic partner to 50 per cent in the future must be in line with Jordanian laws. The IPC added that it was not against raising the stake and that allowing cement imports after the end of the concession is a matter subject to a government decision at the time.

Regarding the response of international companies to the second firm, official hinted that the privatisation of the National Petroleum Refinery could be postponed. "The whole process is closer to being postponed but will not be cancelled," an official said. He indicated that the reasons for such a measure is due to the insufficient offers from the international companies which were contacted to work as financial consultant for the privatisation of the refinery.

The official explained that receiving two offers only is absolutely not enough and that constitutes a reason that presses for a postponement and for requesting new other offers that could be under better terms (Al Ra'i).

Jordan secures \$630m for water projects, seeks \$5 billion over the next 14 years

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has secured \$630 million in grants and loans for water projects to be implemented during a period of five years, Water and Irrigation Minister Munther Haddadin told reporters Sunday.

The projects, estimated to cost \$780 million, will enable Jordan to minimise the deterioration in the annual water deficit until it stabilises in 2012, according to Dr. Haddadin.

At a press conference, Dr. Haddadin said Jordan would seek \$5 billion over the next 14 years to

finance water-resource management projects.

Despite the huge investment envisaged under the Water Sector Investment Programme prepared by the ministry for the coming 14 years, Jordan's water deficit for all uses will grow from about 222 MCM in 1995 to 251 MCM by the year 2011, the minister indicated.

Dr. Haddadin said Jordan's renewable water resources are 750 MCM a year — well below the annual consumption of one billion cubic metres.

"The status of our stock is negative, we need a lot more than we have. That places a burden on our team here to effect good management of water resources to make ends meet," the minister explained.

The amount Jordan received followed a donor nations conference for the Jordanian water sector, held in the ancient city of Petra last November. Dr. Haddadin said.

During the conference Jordan submitted the Water Sector Investment Programme which defined a strategy for the sector and policies for

water used for irrigation and underground water management, he added.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) granted Jordan \$50 million for a project to replace water networks in some areas of Amman and expand the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Aqaba.

The USAID has also contributed \$50 million in grants for the replacement of water networks in Amman.

The World Bank contributed \$55 million in loans for the Amman Water and Wastewater Management Contract aimed at increasing operating efficiency, reducing the unaccounted for water by 20 per cent and improving the constancy of water supply in the service area.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) extended about \$45 million in loans for the rehabilitation of existing networks and replacement of old ones in some areas of the capital.

The Italian government has allocated \$20 million for the same purpose. Another \$23.7 million

was contributed by the German Development Bank for the rehabilitation and replacement of water networks in Amman in addition to about \$24.3 million to increase the water pumping capacity from the Jordan Valley to Amman.

The bank has also earmarked some \$49.6 million for the implementation of a project to ensure wastewater flows from Ain Ghazal pre-treatment plant to As-Samra Waste Stabilisation Ponds.

This project was initiated to meet the increasing wastewater flows from the Amman-Zarqa basin because of the large increases of population.

About \$49 million were also allocated by the bank to improve sewer networks in the northern city of Irbid in addition to some \$4.7 million for the Wadi Mousa Supply project.

The Japanese government contributed \$70 million for a project aimed at increasing water pumping capacity from Deir Alla to Amman.

About \$22 million came from France to expand the wastewater

plant in Baqa'a and implement the first and second phases of the Pella water project.

Some of the amount will be used to finance the Wadi Mousa Supply Project.

The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development contributed about \$154 million to finance the Mujib weir conveyor and Southern Ghors infrastructure.

This project will utilise the base flows and the flood flows of both Wadi Mujib and Wadi Wala for industrial, touristic and agricultural purposes.

Dr. Haddadin said Jordan is seeking to secure about \$625 million for the Disi Amman Water Conveyor which aims at supplying an average of an annual 100 MCM of good quality water from the Disi Aquifer to Amman, a distance of more than 300 kilometres.

A further \$300 million are needed, he added, for the implementation of a sewer project in the Zarqa Basin including Greater Amman, Zarqa and Rusaifa.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 1/03/98 19:06									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.9365	0.6078	1.4837	125.90	1.4200	1787.00	2.0462	0.0945
DE Mark	0.5165	1.0000	0.3349	0.8871	69.43	0.7832	365.12	1.1282	0.3345
GB Sterling	1.6450	2.9850	1.0000	2.4115	207.45	2.3372	2839.62	3.3650	10.0000
CH Franc	0.6752	1.2311	0.4148	1.0000	96.89	0.5700	1220.05	1.9937	0.1454
JP Yen	0.0079	1.4393	0.4822	1.1817	1.1278	14.18	162.40	4.8290	0.0037
CA Dollar	0.7038	1.2798	0.4274	1.0288	1.13	1.2873	1.4397	4.2808	0.0071
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0143	0.3398	0.0819	1421.28	0.7946	1.144	3.4030	0.0000
Nt. Guilder	0.4887	0.8831	0.2988	0.7153	81.50	0.8842	873.11	1.0000	0.2728
FR Franc	0.1644	0.2990	0.0998	0.2404	20.87	0.2335	33.63	33.6300	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	1.0000	1.9365	0.6078	1.4837	125.90	1.4200	1787.00	2.0462	0.0945
Jordan Dinar	1.4184	2.7505	0.9370	2.4008	0.3051	3.6727	1628.50	3.4000	0.0956
Saudi Riyal	0.2688	0.5190	0.1805	0.4503	0.1801	2.1585	4.7956	0.0685	0.2093
Bahraini Dinar	0.2747	0.5347	0.1891	0.4601	0.1891	2.1585	4.7956	0.0685	0.2093
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.5347	0.1891	0.4601	0.1891	2.1585	4.7956	0.0685	0.2093
Kuwait Dinar	0.2747	0.5347	0.1891	0.4601	0.1891	2.1585	4.7956	0.0685	0.2093
Emirate Dinar	0.2747	0.5347	0.1891	0.4601	0.1891	2.1585	4.7956	0.0685	0.2093
Lebanese L1000	0.85	1.6439	0.5637	1.4837	0.1891	2.1585	4.7956	0.0685	0.2093
Egyptian	0.2941	0.5685	0.1991	0.5109	1.0708	0.0897	1.0802	449.56	1.0000

Energy									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
Brent	13.51	26.08	9.41	24.08	193.51	13.51	1628.50	3.4000	0.0956
WTI	12.41	24.08	8.41	22.08	178.51	12.41	1528.50	3.0000	0.0856
Bonny	13.51	26.08	9.41	24.08	193.51	13.51	1628.50	3.4000	0.0956
Dubai	11.62	22.08	7.41	20.08	158.51	11.62	1428.50	2.6000	0.0756
UL Gas	167.00	324.00	116.00	296.00	2382.00	167.00	2048.00	4.8000	0.1356

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
USD	5.54	5.55	5.56	5.57	5.58	5.59	5.60	5.61	5.62
GBP	7.41	7.42	7.43	7.44	7.45	7.46	7.47	7.48	7.49
JPY	1.25	0.48	0.90	0.34	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84
DEM	3.40	3.43	3.53	3.63	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85
FRF	4.03	3.84	3.80	3.60	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69
CHF	0.62	0.62	0.66	1.01	1.11	1.11	1.11	1.11	1.11
ITL	6.00	6.30	6.53	6.19	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Main Equity Indices									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
New York	8545.72	55.05	0.85	8586.88	8474.97	8490.67	8490.67	8490.67	8490.67
New York	1049	0.33	0.03	1051.86	1044.4	1048.67	1048.67	1048.67	1048.67
London	5787.3	2.5	0.04	5821.8	5741.8	5748.4	5748.4	5748.4	5748.4
Tokyo	16831.67	329.87	2	16831.7	16861.3	16861.7	16861.7	16861.7	16861.7
Paris	3421.92	24.89	0.73	3431.45	3380.06	3387.03	3387.03	3387.03	3387.03
Frankfurt	4708.83	17.8	0.38	4736.48	4699.09	4692.03	4692.03	4692.03	4692.03

Energy									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
Coffee (c/lbs)	172.25	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Cocoa (c/lbs)	1481	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	287	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Wheat (c/lbs)	0	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	26.86	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Tee (c/lbs)	190	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Berley (c/lbs)	0	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Rice (c/lbs)	400	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot

JOD Cross Rates									
	US Dollar	DE Mark	GB Sterling	CH Franc	JP Yen	CA Dollar	IT Lira	Nt. Guilder	FR Franc
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	0.710	0.710	0.710	0.710	0.710	0.710	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1634	1.1692	1.1692	1.1692	1.1692	1.1692	1.1692	1.1692	1.1692
DE Mark	0.3897	0.3916	0.3916	0.3916	0.3916	0.3916	0.3916	0.3916	0.3916
CH Franc	0.4821	0.4845	0.4845	0.4845	0.4845	0.4845	0.4845	0.4845	0.4845
FR Franc	0.1162	0.1168	0.1168	0.1168	0.1168	0.1168	0.1168	0.1168	0.1168
JP Yen	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612	0.0612
Nt. Guilder	0.3466	0.3473	0.3473	0.3473	0.3473	0.3473	0.3473	0.3473	0.3473
IT Lira	0.3988	0.3976	0.3976	0.3976	0.3976	0.3976	0.3976	0.3976	0.3976

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Aqel sees interest on loans dropping to 12% soon

By Mahmoud Masharqah
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Mifleh Aqel, the regional manager at the Arab Bank, Sunday commented the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) for initiating the overnight money depositing scheme at the CBJ as a very important step towards developing Jordan's banking system and increasing its efficiency.


In a statement to Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times, Mr. Aqel said that the new measure will boost the efficiency of monetary market by contributing to the stability of the interest rates and preventing fluctuations, witnessed recently at Jordanian banks.

According to Mr. Aqel, the overnight money depositing step at the CBJ is a mean for achieving many objectives like offering further instruments to enhance monetary policies and strengthening the local money market's efficiency. This instrument helps the central bank to absorb surplus liquidity in the market and subsequently helps the banks to avoid sharp reduction of interest rates.

The new measure introduced for the first time in Jordan is bound to help the banks exploit the money surplus in a very efficient manner. Referring to current interest rates, Mr. Aqel indicated that they are now stable at around 8.5 per cent but depending on tenor and amount.

According to Mr. Aqel, interest rates on certificates of deposits for three months stood at 7.2 per cent last month compared to 5.6 per cent in January 1998. He explained that the changes in the interest rates reflects the fact that the Jordanian banks are absorbing the liquidity and stabilising interest rates.

Noting that interest rates on loans are gradually dropping, he expected them to be around 12 per cent in the near future.

<div></div> <div>AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOUSING BANK CENTER 2ND FLOOR - SUBISANT TELEPHONE: 60711 / 60719 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 01/03/1998</div>											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
346.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	15.7	1.17	28	1180	403260	339.00	342.00	3.00+	
2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	2	0.00	12	17700	31760	1.79	1.79	-	
3.540	1.350	BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	11	18735	25291	1.35	1.35	-	
1.300	0.890	MID-EAST TRV. BK.	64.0	0.00	2	9750	9563	0.96	0.98	+0.02	
2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.1	6.21	8	7200	12164	1.68	1.68	-	
5.300	4.610	THE HOUSING BK.	29.9	1.94	12	14036	70176	4.98	5.00	+0.02	
4.180	1.200	JOR. KUWAT BANK	10.0	0.00	6	368	689	1.92	1.87	-0.05	
920	620	JOR. GULF BANK	4.3	9.72	11	29050	20916	1.73	1.72	-0.01	
4.020	1.990	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.6	4.59	18	8000	16669	2.10	2.09	-0.01	
1.530	1.020	UNION BK. SAV. TRV.	7	0.00	3	26600	27132	1.02	1.02	-	
1.550	0.800	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	5	17.66	5	3250	2718	0.84	0.84	-	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 237.48	%CHG: +0.66	116	135869	620338				
2.120	0.900	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	9.6	0.00	1	300	315	1.00	1.05	+0.05	
2.370	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.7	6.36	8	8850	20844	2.37	2.36	-0.01	
2.300	1.200	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.4	0.00	1	500	625	1.25	1.25	-	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 122.89	%CHG: +0.17	10	9650	21784				
2.080	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	4.88	29	27500	56699	2.06	2.08	-0.01	
4.520	3.050	NATL. PORTFOLIO	0.0	2.84	1	7000	240	3.40	3.40	-	
8.900	6.700	ALRA'1	15.7	5.71	1	100	875	8.75	8.75	-	
4.050	2.890	ARAB INT'L TRV. EDUC.	10.6	0.00	7	2100	8489	4.02	4.06	+0.04	
1.090	0.900	DAHA EDUCATION	47.5	0.00	1	94	94	0.72	0.72	-	
1.880	1.200	UNIFIED CO.	8.4	6.25	34	22950	40522	1.76	1.76	-	
0.810	0.600	UNION LAND DEV.	0	0.00	3	1000	690	0.68	0.69	+0.01	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 118.01	%CHG: +0.22	104	74150	128950				
4.450	2.690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.5	4.00	19	15983	44028	2.75	2.75	-	
4.140	3.050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.4	2.84	1	700	340	3.40	3.40	-	
7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.2	3.06	6	4047	25137	6.20	6.25	+0.05	
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.1	8.51	6	1185	12330	10.30	10.45	+0.15	
2.650	1.280	INDUSTRIAL COMM. CORP.	0	0.00	5	847	835	1.30	1.30	-	
4.850	3.440	ALRA'1 PEARL. HAVY.	13.3	3.86	18	148133	737869	4.95	5.05	+0.10	
6.070	4.400	DR ALHADA DV. TRV.	14.7	9.17	13	765	45879	6.05	6.00	-0.05	
1.610	0.400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.2	0.00	31	49000	23851	0.49	0.48	-0.01	
1.180	0.680	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	25.1	0.00	4	1550	1248	0.80	0.82	+0.02	
0.650	0.510	NATIONAL INDS.	0	0.00	4	7750	1568	0.57	0.57	-	
1.050	0.370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	0	0.00	16	10700	4494	0.43	0.42	-0.01	
2.320	1.380	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	12.9	6.99	1	150	215	1.43	1.43	-	
3.100	0.920	NATL. CABLE WIRE-MFAC	27.2	0.00	29	12900	22180	1.14	1.13	-0.01	
0.790	0.510	JOR. SILICONES	0	0.00	13	15000	8935	0.61	0.59	-0.02	
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.6	5.07	29	16000	22231	1.40	1.38	-0.02	
1.720	0.810	UNIV. MED. INDS.	7	23.47	47	63200	99483	0.94	0.95	+0.01	
0.410	0.390	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	10.2	13.16	4	3300	78	0.78	0.78	-	
1.620	1.350	NATL. CHELORINE	14.1	4.67	5	1100	1646	1.48	1.50	+0.02	
0.990	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	17.8	0.00	18	13116	12761	0.98	0.97	-0.01	
1.080	0.750	WTL. TORACO	6.4	7.00	11	13700	3900	1.20	1.20	-	
1.200	0.860	UNION CH. & REC.	50.9	0.00	11	4835	1111	0.97	1.01	+0.04	
0.810	0.660	JORDAN STEEL	35.3	6.41	87	115100	88670	0.75	0.78	+0.03	
0.840	0.570	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.3	14.93	38	53250	35253	0.67	0.67	-	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 113.97	%CHG: +0.51	576	560406	1173881				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 170.62	%CHG: +0.58	806	780075	1944952				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 01/03/1998											
N	1.050	960	EXPORT - F. IN. BAK. 75%	E	0.00	10	11100	8264	1.00	0.99	-0.01
	530	340	JOR. TRADE FA.	10.7	0.00	21	42250	17261	2.40	2.40	-
	660	480	NATL. COMM. CENTERS	E	0.00	1	600	336	0.55	0.56	+0.01
	660	800	ALRA'1 TRV. 50%	E	0.00	11	2900	5522	0.72	0.72	-
	620	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	E	0.00	41	112900	56031	0.50	0.49	-0.01
N	36.000	1.050	JOR. TOURIST TRANS. CO.	3.9	2.50	1	2000	2260	1.10	1.10	-
	140	290	JOR. INDS. MACHS-REMCO	0	0.00	1	2600	364	1.15	1.14	-0.01
	640	370	ARAB FOOD & FOD.	0	0.00	1	800	3562	0.88	0.88	-
	480	240	ARAB INT'L. TRV. TRD.	32.2	0.00	9	18700	5231	0.27	0.28	+0.01
	540	280	NATL. TEXTILE	0	0.00	9	36000	1325	0.34	0.35	+0.01
	750	360	NATL. BULB. CO. -NABCO	0	0.00	24	3300	340	0.40	0.40	-
	670	580	MID-EAST PEARL. 90%	E	0.00	40	53315	29750	0.64	0.66	+0.02
	730	550	RAIL PEARL.	E	0.00	10	1000	720	0.72	0.72	-
	240	460	INDS. ENG.	0	0.00	1	1140	29	0.28	0.28	-
	830	510	INDS. CERAMIC	14.2	0.00	1	100	54	0.54	0.54	-
N	550	550	ADVANCED CERAMIC. IND.	E	0.00	7	9650	3734	0.64	0.66	+0.02
	670	480	PEARL. SALT & CONV.	E	0.00	2	420	42	0.42	0.42	-
	740	490	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	30	32300	18421	0.56	0.58	+0.02
	950	470	OPTICALS HEARING 75%	E	0.00	2	1050	368	0.57	0.60	+0.03
N	1.000	1.000	NAB ALJUBAYLA 75%	97.4	0.00	14	20150	10156	0.88	0.88	-
N	1.310	1.000	WUTRIDAR	E	0.00	9	3350	3773	1.10	1.13	+0.03
N	1.000	0.750	KERBAL PRINT CO. 75%	E	0.00	9	16000	8878	0.80	0.84	+0.04
GRAND TOTAL					255	406165	192197				

Kafelnikov reaches title showdown against Pioline

LONDON (AFP) — Russia's 1996 French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov reached a title showdown with Frenchman Cedric Pioline at the new ATP Battersea Park event on Saturday after putting out South African Wayne Ferreira.

The 24-year-old Kafelnikov, who missed the Australian Open because of injury, showed he is coming back to his best and he constantly had Ferreira lunging at shadows with his cleverly-angled winners.

The South African, who eliminated seeds Goran Ivanisevic and Pat Rafter earlier in the tournament, went down 7-5, 6-4.

Pioline, last year's Wimbledon runner-up, showed that he clearly reserves his best tennis for the English capital when he produced a straight-sets win over Dutch opponent Jan Siemerink.

The French player scored a 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) win.

Kafelnikov, who looks likely to rise to number four in the world from seven when the new ATP rankings are released on Monday, said he was "relieved" to have got past a revitalised Ferreira.

"Wayne and I play similar games but I was more consistent from the baseline. I knew I would have a tough match. He has been having a good run with wins over Ivanisevic and Rafter this week."

One service break in the



Wayne Ferreira

12th game gave Kafelnikov the first set and he went into a 3-1 lead in the second with a break in the fourth game.

The 26-year-old South African, who has slipped to 47th in the world after having been ranked as high as six in 1995, hit back to break Kafelnikov's serve for the only time in the match in the following game.

The Russian recovered his composure and broke Ferreira in the 10th game to go through to the final after 78 minutes.

Kafelnikov said that

although happy to see his ranking rise he had no illusions as to how hard a task it would be to become world number one.

"I have always had it at the back of my mind, but it will not be an easy race for me. There's another player called Pete Sampras and he will not give up the number one position very easily," he said.

Pioline had lost to Siemerink three times in four previous meetings — but he always looked in command on Saturday. He broke the Dutchman in the eighth game, which

earned him the first set, and did not have a single break point against him in the entire match.

Nor did he lose a service point in the tie-break game. "Jan is difficult to play," said Pioline when asked to explain his poor record against the Dutch player.

"He doesn't serve hard but he rarely misses his first serve. And he returns well and makes you play all the time."

Pioline has played Kafelnikov nine times and has won only once — and that was on a slow clay court at Monte Carlo.

Juventus warned by stars after 1-0 win

MILAN (AFP) — Juventus' hopes of winning the Champions League could be shattered next Wednesday against Dynamo Kiev, according to star midfielders Didier Deschamps and Zinedine Zidane.

The warning from the two French internationals followed Juventus' disappointing performance in a 1-0 win over 10-man Bari on Saturday.

An own goal was all the Italian champions could muster against a mid-table side who had Diego De Ascentis sent off within minutes of the re-start.

Deschamps said: "We need to play like a different team against Dynamo Kiev. This one would have few chances of its own and would run a lot of risks at the back."

He went on: "The result, and a short spell in the first half, was the only good thing about this match. There was nothing in the second half."

"Overall, it was a game we should have won early, and instead we were made to suffer for. We did our duty, but nothing else. We'll take the three points and think about how we can improve."

Deschamps' verdict was shared by Zidane, who said: "We played well for the first half-hour... but we struggled in the second half, and if we'd sorted things out earlier that wouldn't have happened."

"On Wednesday, we've got to do better. We can do it: we know that these are the quarter-finals of the Champions League and that we can't afford to make any mistakes in the home leg."

"We know that the objective is not only to win, but to win by a big margin. But this time I think it's going to be more difficult than it's been in the past."

Coach Marcello Lippi was more interested in talking about the result on Saturday than the way it was achieved.

"I like it when Juventus win, even when they don't play sparkling football," he said. "We didn't take all the chances we created, but that's not a criticism — you can't always get things right."

"We were perhaps a bit timid. After losing our last two games, we'd probably lost a bit of self-confidence, and we let Bari take the initiative."

But he was confident that the sparkle would be back in Turin on Wednesday night, when they host the Ukrainians.

"It's a great challenge, but a very stimulating one as well," he said.



Boris Becker

Becker faces Kiefer

SCOTSDALE (AFP) — Boris Becker will find a hungry and familiar face awaiting him in his first appearance in several years on an American tennis court when he begins play at next week's \$340,000 Franklin Templeton Classic.

The 30-year-old German was drawn late Saturday to take on former pupil Nicolas Kiefer in the opening round of the first outdoor United States event of the season on the ATP Tour.

Kiefer, formerly a member of the Becker-run Mercedes junior squad back in Germany, broke away late last year and is his own man with a No. 2 ranking.

Becker, who is reducing his playing schedule to concentrate on guiding German Davis Cup fortunes, is playing in the United States for the first time in at least two years. He is ranked 65th and falling, but knows Kiefer's game like his own.

His last performance of note in the Americas was a semi-final game at the U.S. Open in September 1995.

Becker has missed many events on this side of the Atlantic due to injuries over the past 24 months.

The winner of the showcase match at the desert Arizona Princess resort here will face either Australian veteran Mark Woodforde or a qualifier in the second round.

Andre Agassi, who made a splash again with good form at the Australian Open, will be chasing his second title in as many events.

The 27-year-old former World No. 1 claimed the trophy a fortnight ago in San Jose as he successfully follows up on his comeback vow of late 1997.

Australian Mark Philippoussis is top seed and defending champion and begins with a qualifier. No. 2 Alberto Costa of Spain plays Slava Dosedel.

Makinen takes Safari Rally lead

NAIROBI (AFP) — World champion Tommi Makinen of Finland held the lead after Saturday's opening six special stages of the Safari Rally.

Makinen won only one stage on the first leg in his Mitsubishi Lancer, but opened a lead of 36 seconds over his teammate Richard Burns of Britain. Colin McRae of Britain was third at 1:48 behind in his Subaru Impreza.

Makinen lost brakes and later clipped a tree branch, smashing his windscreen and putting his trip meter out of action on the fourth competitive section from Olkejuado to Il Bisel in the bed of the Rift Valley.

He also had another hair-raising encounter when he had to weave his car through a herd of cattle and donkeys at Timbuctoo.

"I will go flat out again tomorrow, which is the longest leg of the three-day Safari. The brakes were really stupid. It was just a loose pipe and all the fluid drained out," Makinen said.

McRae set the fastest time in four of the six special stages but suffered two punctures in the second stage between Ole Tepesi and Ngong, dropping at that point to sixth.

Fourth-placed Carlos Sainz of Spain suffered rear suspension and steering problems with his Toyota Corolla, while Frenchman Didier Auriol gave the Safari a dramatic first leg finish by rolling his Corolla on the final stage of the day.



Liverpool midfielder Steve McManaman battles off Aston Villa's Riccardo Scimeca at Villa Park stadium. It is John Gregory's first FA Carling Premiership match in charge of Aston Villa and they won the game 2-1 (Reuters photo)

SCOREBOARD

NBA

Miami	95	New York	90
Dallas	109	Washington	100
Charlotte	90	Orlando	87
Chicago	109	Sacramento	100
San Antonio	100	Philadelphia	95

NHL

Boston	6	Pittsburgh	2
Chicago	4	Colorado	0
Dallas	4	Phoenix	0
St Louis	5	Los Angeles	2
Philadelphia	3	NY Rangers	1
Tampa Bay	5	Washington	2
New Jersey	4	Carolina	3
Toronto	4	Montreal	0
Edmonton	4	San Jose	1
Vancouver	6	Ottawa	4

Linz WTA Tour

Semi-finals	
Jana Novotna (Cze x1) bt Silvia Farina (Ita)	6-4, 6-1
Dominique Van Roost (Bel x4) bt Iva Majoli (Cro x2)	6-2, retired

Battersea Cup

Semi-finals	
Cedric Pioline (Fra) bt Jan Siemerink (Ned)	6-3, 7-6 (7/4)
Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus x3) bt Wayne Ferreira (Rus)	7-5, 6-4

Oklahoma City WTA tournament

Semi-final	
Joanne Kruger (Rus x14) bt Sarah Pitkowski (Fra x7)	3-6, 6-3, 6-4
Venus Williams (USA x3) bt Lindsay Davenport (USA x1)	6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-3

Philadelphia ATP tournament

Semi-finals	
Pete Sampras (USA x1) bt Tommy Haas (Ger x6)	6-4, 6-4
Thomas Enqvist (Swe x3) bt Sebastian Larenz (Can)	6-3, 3-6, 6-3

French 'last sixteen' Cup

Montpellier	0	Marseille	0
St. Etienne	0	Metz	0
Argentan	1	Lens	3
Evry	0	Lyon	1
Guingamp	1	Toulon	1

Portuguese First division

Guimaraes	5	D. Chaves	1
Setubal	0	Sporting	2

Spanish First Division

Real Madrid	0	Malaga	0
Compostela	0	Granada	0
Levante	2	Real Betis	0

Italian Serie A

Inter Milan	0	Parma	0
Lazio	1	Napoli	0

Scottish Premier Division

Aberdeen	0	Rangers	0
Hibernian	0	Celtic	0
Rangers	0	Hearts	0
Aberdeen	0	Dundee Utd	0

Dundee Utd & Motherwell match postponed

Brundisliga

B. Mjallby	0	IFK Sundsvall	0
Wolfsburg	0	IFK Gothenburg	0
Hammarby	1	Spartan	0
B. Mjallby	0	Celtic	0
B. Leverkusen	0	A. Bielefeld	0
Duisburg	0	1899 Munich	0

English Premiership

Aston Villa	0	Liverpool	0
Barnsley	2	Wimbledon	0
Blackburn	0	Leicester	0
Chelsea	0	Man Utd	0
Crystal Palace	0	Derby	0
Derby	0	S. Wednesday	0
Everton	0	Newcastle	0
Leeds	0	Southampton	0

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Demi Moore ... in G.I. JANE		Pierce Brosnan as James Bond... in 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES		I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30		ABDOUN Nicolas Cage ... in HONEYMOON IN VEGAS Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 & High School High Shows: 3:30		ABDOUN Volcano Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and his group For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155	
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE Shows: 5 p.m. only		Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30							

Heat overcome Nets; Hornets win

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Alonzo Mourning scored 11 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter Saturday as the Miami Heat rallied from a 20-point third-quarter deficit to win their ninth straight game, 95-93 over the New Jersey Nets.

The victory was Miami's ninth in a row on the road. The heat have now won 13 of 14 overall.

Miami, which entered the fourth quarter trailing 78-63, won it without Tim Hardaway, who was ejected after receiving two technical fouls with 4:51 to play in the third period. They also lost Keith Askins, who was called for a flagrant foul on Keith Van Horn and ejected with 6:39 remaining in the game.

Kendall Gill led the Nets with 22 points, while Sam Cassell added 19.

Dallas Mavericks 103, Washington Wizards 77: In Washington, Michael Finley scored 27 points and A.C. Green had a season-high 25 points and 11 rebounds in Dallas' rout of Washington.

The Mavericks, winning for just the 11th time in 57 games this season, handed Washington its worst defeat of the season. The Wizards' previous biggest loss was a 22-point defeat to New York in November.

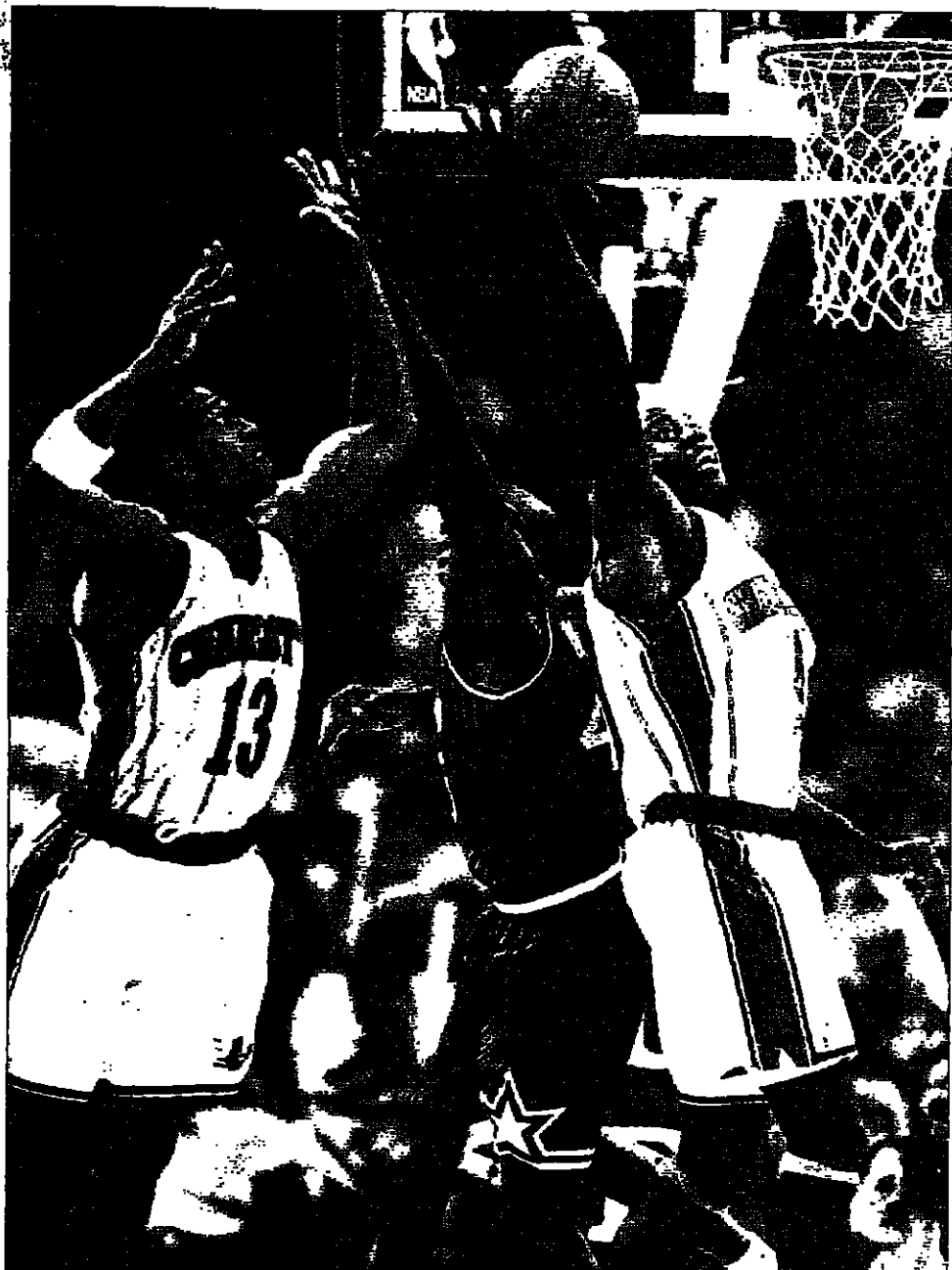
Rod Strickland led the Wizards with 27 points, but Washington couldn't overcome a season-low 34.6 percent (28-for-81) shooting from the field.

Cedric Ceballos, making his first start since being traded to the Mavericks from Phoenix on Feb. 18, had 21 points and 10 rebounds.

Green, playing all 48 minutes, extended his National Basketball Association-record consecutive game streak to 953 in the Mavericks' biggest win of the season.

Chris Webber finished with 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Wizards.

Charlotte Hornets 90,



Charlotte Hornets' forward Glen Rice, right, flicks a rebound away from Orlando Magic's Charles Outlaw, (C), under pressure from Hornets' Bobby Phillips, during first half NBA action at the Charlotte Coliseum (Reuters photo)

Orlando Magic 80: In Charlotte, North Carolina, Anthony Mason had 24 points and 13 rebounds as Charlotte pulled away from Orlando.

Leading 73-69 with 7:50 left in the game, the Hornets scored nine straight points over the next four minutes, led by Mason with a slam dunk and a three-point play. The burst effectively put the game out of reach.

All five starters scored in double figures for the Hornets, who won their fourth straight. Glen Rice had 17 points, followed by David Wesley with 15, Bobby Phillips 13 and Matt Geiger 12.

Derek Harper paced the Magic with 20 points. Charles Outlaw added 16 and David Benoit 15.

Chicago Bulls 109, Sacramento Kings 94: At Chicago, Scottie Pippen scored a season-high 29 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed 18 rebounds in his

return to the starting lineup as Chicago defeated Sacramento.

Mitch Richmond outscored Michael Jordan 34-28 in a battle of All-Star guards, but couldn't keep the Kings from suffering their sixth consecutive loss.

Pippen missed the first 35 games after undergoing foot surgery, and didn't return until he rescinded a trade demand. He has helped the Bulls go 19-5 since coming back Jan. 10.

Rodman, going for his seventh straight NBA rebounding title, was relegated to a reserve role the previous six games because he missed two practices. He got back into the starting lineup due to centre Luc Longley's knee injury.

Corliss Williamson added 29 points for Sacramento, which was outscored by an average of 109-93 in going 0-5 so far on its seven-game road trip.

San Antonio Spurs 100,

Philadelphia 76ers 88: At San Antonio, Avery Johnson scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half as San Antonio rallied from a 10-point halftime deficit to beat Philadelphia.

Johnson and Tim Duncan, who had 27 points and 17 rebounds, helped make up for the limited playing time of David Robinson. The All-Star centre missed the previous six games with a right knee injury and played just 24 minutes against the Sixers, finishing with 17 points and eight rebounds.

Philadelphia was led by Derrick Coleman with 35 points and Allen Iverson with 19. The Sixers led 53-43 at the half and were up 61-56 with 6:27 left in the third period, but Johnson led a rally that pulled the Spurs within one at the end of the quarter.

Then San Antonio outscored the 76ers 31-18 in the fourth quarter.

Greene wins Botany Bay race

SYDNEY (AFP) — American world champion Maurice Greene made it a hat-trick of Australian sprint victories with a meet record time in taking the Botany Bay Gift race on grass here Sunday.

Greene became only the second runner to win the 120 metre final off scratch and flew home to beat England's Darren Campbell and fellow American Jon Drummond in 11.8secs.

Greene became the first sprinter to clock a sub-10 second time in Australia when winning the 100m sprint in 9.99 at the Sydney Grand Prix meet here Saturday after his 10.06 victory over Drummond and Olympic champion and world record holder Donovan Bailey in Melbourne last Wednesday.

Greene and Drummond lashed out at drug users in the post-race conference Sunday and Greene also took time to defuse antagonism between himself and Bailey.

"It's sad that Donovan has taken my running so personal, but if that's how he's going to take it, that's it," said Greene.

"I like running against him because he always brings out the best in me and I'm going to continue to run fast and keep making him mad at me."

Greene has already set a target for the 100 metres as a warning to other sprinters.

"I'm aiming at 9.76s this year and when I accomplish that I'll then set another goal. If the conditions are right the record could go at any time."

Greene said he had been drug tested twice during his Australian campaign and about 20 to 30 times in the last four months.

"I'm not scared to take drug tests and it doesn't present any problems," he said.

"But every time I run now I expect to run in the nine seconds area. I'll never run 10 seconds again."

Sydney sprinter Melinda Gainsford-Taylor won the women's 100 yards final from Katherine Merry of England and Australian Aboriginal Nova Peris-Kneebone.

Egypt tighten N. African grip

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — Egypt confirmed the supremacy of North African teams in continental events by lifting the Nations Cup here on Saturday with a convincing 2-0 triumph over holders South Africa.

Raja Casablanca of Morocco and Etoile du Sahel and Espérance of Tunisia won the club championships last year. Morocco hold the youth title and Egypt are the junior champions.

Seeking their first title since 1986, the Pharaohs made imaginative use of set pieces throughout the 22-day tournament and hours of practice led to the killer second blow.

Apart from disappointing crowds at most matches, the 21st African Nations Cup was a success.

The third-place playoff was memorable where Democratic Republic of Congo, scored three goals in the last four minutes to draw 4-1 with Burkina Faso before winning the penalty shootout.

It was also a cup that marked the end of distinguished careers for former African Footballer of the Year winners Abedi Pele of Ghana and Kalusha Bwalya of Zambia.

Egypt and hosts Zimbabwe automatically qualify for the 2000 finals which should mark the return of Olympic champions Nigeria, whose two-year suspension for failing to defend the title ended this weekend.

Enqvist, Sampras in Philly final

PHILADELPHIA (AFP) — Third-seeded Thomas Enqvist of Sweden fought off Canadian qualifier Sebastien Lareau Saturday to set up a showdown with defending champion Pete Sampras in the final of the ATP Tour event here.

Enqvist, who won this event in 1995, held on for a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Lareau.

Earlier, the top-seeded Sampras earned a berth in the final with a 6-4, 6-4 triumph over sixth-seeded German teenager Tommy Haas.

Enqvist had never beaten Sampras in six all-time meetings until finally downing the world's top-ranked player two years ago in Cincinnati. The 23-year-old Enqvist won his first title of the season three weeks ago in Marseille, France.

"He's (Sampras) the best player in the world. It's always fun to play him, especially in a final," Enqvist said.

"I'm looking forward to it. You have to go on the court thinking you can win, and that's all I'm going to try to do. It's going to be fun."

Enqvist broke Lareau's serve in the sixth game of the opening set to take a 4-2 lead. Lareau broke back but then was unable to hold his own serve, and Enqvist closed out the set in 31 minutes.

Lareau went on to even the match at one set apiece after Enqvist lost his serve at love in the second game of the second set. But Lareau hit a forehand long to lose his serve in the sixth game of the third set, and Enqvist did not lose a point as he served out the final game en route to the victory.

"It was tough to play him because he doesn't give me any kind of rhythm at all," Enqvist said. "He had a high percentage of first serves in and didn't give me anything to hit when he was serving. I just tried to be as solid as possible, make few mistakes and hope I could get a few good shots, and I was able to do that today."

Enqvist converted only three of 11 break-point opportunities, while Lareau converted half of his four break chances.

Sampras, who advanced to his second ATP Tour final this month, is seeking his fourth title at this event and his 53rd career ATP Tour title, the most among active players.

Sampras broke Haas in the seventh game of the second set with a spectacular back-

hand crosscourt winner. He closed out the match in 67 minutes on a forehand volley down the line, improving to 12-2 this season.

"My first serve was pretty good, but I was able to get big serves when I needed to," said Sampras, who recorded 11 aces. "Maybe he was getting down a little bit on himself in the second set."

Sampras was broken in the second game of the first set and fell behind, 1-4. However, he broke back in the seventh game and again in the ninth game as Haas double-faulted on break point. Sampras then fired an ace to take the first set.

"I was up a break at 4-2 in the first, and he put a return of service down the line," said Haas, who won just 26 percent of his return points. "He then broke me again to get back into the match. At that point, he just took control. He didn't give me a chance to break him again in that first set."

"All week I have gotten off to bad starts, losing my first service game," Sampras explained.

"He came out firing. Once I got back into the match, I got my confidence back. I was able to get back into my serve and settle down. If he had won the first set, anything was possible."

The 26-year-old Sampras earned his first professional title here in 1990 and also won in 1992.

Sampras has barely retained the top ranking in men's tennis the last two weeks. He has not won a tournament this season after capturing eight last year, including a victory over Patrick Rafter in the final of this event.

"My tennis has gotten better during the week and I'm looking forward to a good final tomorrow," Sampras added. "I feel like if I can play the way I know I can play, especially the way I've been the last two matches, I know I like my chances."

Novotna, Van Roost in final

LINZ (AFP) — Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic surged into the final of the WTA Tour event here on Saturday with a 6-4, 6-1 win over unseeded Italian Silvia Farina.

Top-seeded Novotna, beaten finalist last week in Hanover, scored the 500th win of her career, joining Martina Navratilova, Chris Evert and Hana Mandlikova in passing the milestone.

The 29-year-old will face Belgium's fourth-seeded Dominique van Roost of Belgium in the final as she seeks her second title in the event she won in 1995.

Van Roost won the first set 6-2 against second-seeded Iva Majoli of Croatia and Majoli was then forced to withdraw with a back injury.

Van Roost is enjoying a fantastic year in which she has so far won the title in Auckland and also made finals in Hobart and Paris.

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Arab League, Libya discuss solutions to Lockerbie crisis

OIC, Syria hail ICJ ruling, call for lifting sanctions

Combined agency dispatches

ARAB LEAGUE chief Esmat Abdul Meguid and Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntasser discussed here Sunday an Arab strategy aimed at solving the Lockerbie crisis after last week's World Court ruling.

"We examined the basis for an Arab plan aimed at reaching a legal and political solution for the Lockerbie crisis," the Arab League secretary-general told reporters after the meeting.

"We also discussed the means by which we should work in the U.N. Security Council based on the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)," Mr. Abdul Meguid said, stressing that consultations with the Libyan officials will continue.

Mr. Muntasser told reporters: "We have a full and compre-

hensive plan of action and we will reveal it according to developments."

"Today we discussed some tactical alterations to this plan," he said. He did not elaborate but he said all efforts were aimed at removing U.N. sanctions on Libya.

Mr. Muntasser said that Libya was working closely with the Arab League, the Organisation of African Unity, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement to reap the fruit of the ICJ decision.

On Friday the ICJ ended weeks of debate by ruling that it had the jurisdiction to decide where two Libyans suspected of involvement in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing should stand trial.

The ICJ decision overrules demands by the United States and Britain who have insisted that Libya extradite the men for

trial in the U.S. or Scotland.

The ruling was hailed by Libya, Egypt and the 22-member Arab League as an important step towards resolving the crisis which erupted with the mid-air bombing of a U.S. plane over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 which killed 270 people.

Also on Sunday, the head of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called for the suspension of U.N. sanctions against Libya.

Izzeddine Laraki, the OIC secretary general, welcomed "with great satisfaction" the decision of the International Court of Justice in the Hague in favour of the request submitted by Libya.

Mr. Laraki, in a statement from OIC headquarters in the Saudi city of Jeddah, appealed to the U.N. Security Council "for the prompt implementation of ending the embargo

against Libya... pending the final decision" of the World Court.

Syria also welcomed the ruling, officials said on Sunday. They said Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa stated Syria's position in a telephone call on Saturday night with Libyan Unity Affairs Minister Jomaa Al Fezzani.

"Sharaa expressed Syria's satisfaction over the ruling and said the decision was an important step on the way to lifting sanctions imposed against the brotherly people of Libya," one official said.

Libya has been under U.N. sanctions since 1992 to force it to comply with the U.S. and British demand to surrender the two suspects.

Libya wants the suspects to be tried in a neutral country and has the backing of the Arab League and the Organisation of African Unity.

Iraq considers big hike in health charges to thwart black market

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq is considering whether to impose a massive increase in charges for health care to prevent medicines being siphoned off to the sanctions-boostered black market, a health ministry official said Sunday.

The charges levied in six selected government hospitals have been increased a massive 14 times in a trial which may be extended to the rest of the Iraqi health service next year, planning director, Dr. Nazzar Hassan Ali, told AFP.

Previously all government hospitals charged a flat fee of 25 Iraqi dinars (the equivalent of two cents) for non-emergency treatment, but in the trial hospitals the fee has been raised to 350 dinars (28 cents).

In sanctions-hit Iraq, the figure represents 10 per cent of monthly income even for middle-income families, and Dr. Nazzar admitted that many people would not be able to afford the increased fees.

The weekly Mustaqbal headlined the increases on its front-page.

"That's understandable," Dr. Nazzar said. "In the past people were used to free health care."

But he insisted that the higher charges would lead to better health care and to better rationing of available resources.

"If you ask me this policy of 'free of charge' is not right. World Health Organisation (WHO) studies show that it may result in misuse of medi-

cine," the doctor said.

"So now we are looking at health economics... at how we can reorganise the health service so that the patient will have the medicine and take it carefully and the doctor will prescribe it in the right way and not overprescribe."

Dr. Nazzar said that in government hospitals even the limited stocks of medicine available routinely ran out by 10:00 a.m. because of chronic shortages resulting from the sweeping U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Before 1990, Iraq used to import \$750 million of medicine every year, he said.

But now, even with an increased and poorer population, Iraq is authorised to spend just \$200 million every six months on medicine under the "oil-for-food" programme, the sole exemption to the sanctions.

Dr. Nazzar said the result was a thriving black market which was often the only source of medicines for those that could afford it.

He said the prices on the black market were as much as 20 times the flat fee in government health centres, so there was a big incentive for the poor to sell their medicines on.

"So the problem is not whether there are charges or no charges. In this acute shortage of medicine, it is how to distribute the medicine so that it will not be in the black market, but

with the actual patient," he said.

Dr. Nazzar insisted that the new charges would not run into problems with the U.N. monitors charged with supervising Iraq's humanitarian imports under the oil-for-food programme.

"Shall we go ahead with privatisation or not? This is our job and we do not allow for others to interfere with our policy," he said.

Under the terms of the Security Council resolution which authorised the oil-for-food programme, U.N. agencies are charged with ensuring the equitable distribution of humanitarian supplies.

"We have a good cooperation with the WHO and with UNICEF and with the U.N. board here in Baghdad," Dr. Nazzar said.

"We have rules of registration of these medicines coming by the (oil-for-food-programme) and really they are very satisfied with our system."

The U.N. Security Council voted last month to more than double the amount of revenue Iraq can generate for imports of food and medicine by exporting crude, under the oil-for-food accord.

But Iraq has repeatedly accused the United States and Britain of working within a U.N. Sanctions Committee to hold up Iraq's contracts with foreign suppliers, notably for medicines.

Pope hopes Iraq-U.N. deal means risk of war now over

VATICAN CITY (R) — Pope John Paul on Sunday welcomed a deal struck between the United Nations and Iraq on arms inspection and said he hoped the risk of war was now over.

"I would like to invite you to join me in thanking the Lord for the happy conclusion of the Baghdad accord, in the hope that with this, the danger of a recourse to arms has been definitively averted," he told pilgrims in his weekly address.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan last week brokered a deal with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that halted U.S. and British plans to bomb Iraq for denying U.N. inspectors access to sites suspected of housing weapons of mass destruction.

"A particular word of appreciation goes to the U.N. secretary-general and all those who, in this difficult crisis, believed in the goodwill of men," the Polish Pope said.

"Their diplomatic success is certainly a victory for the international community. The situation remains difficult and complex, but hopes are high."

U.K. aircraft carrier enters Arabian Gulf

ABOARD HMS INVINCIBLE (R) — The British aircraft carrier Illustrious entered the gulf over the weekend to help enforce a no-fly zone over southern Iraq. British navy officers said on Sunday.

They said the Illustrious would soon replace the carrier Invincible, which entered the Gulf in January amid rising tension with Iraq over U.N. weapons inspections.

"HMS Illustrious is coming to take over as scheduled," James Burwell-Nugent, captain of the Invincible, told reporters aboard the carrier.

The Illustrious passed through the Strait of Hormuz into the Gulf on Saturday night and will replace the Invincible in a week, officers said.

The Invincible, with 1,200 men and women on board, is anchored at Bahrain's Mina Sulman port and will sail later on Sunday for the northern Gulf before heading home to Portsmouth, they said.

Bahrain is field headquarters of U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet and of UNSCOM, the U.N. Special Commission charged with scrapping Iraq's weapons of mass destruction in line with the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire terms.



DENTAL HYGIENE IN SHANGHAI: A man is getting his tooth extracted by a street dentist in Shanghai Saturday. The dentist only charges 10 yuan (\$1.20) for an extraction and uses what he claims to be his 'secret formula' as anaesthetic (AFP photo)

Netanyahu aides on secret peace mission to Europe — Israel radio

Combined agency dispatches

TWO TOP aides to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were headed to Europe on Sunday on a "secret" mission linked to the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Israeli public radio said.

Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh and diplomatic advisor Uzi Arad left Israel on Sunday morning for a European capital, the radio said, without giving details about their destination or their precise mission.

Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman David Bar-Ilan, meanwhile, was on his way to the United States in a bid to convince Washington not to present any new initiatives on the peace process or proposals for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the radio said.

Israel's failure to carry out

promised troop pullbacks from the West Bank and its settlement policies in the occupied territories are among the reasons for the year-long deadlock in the peace process.

Mr. Netanyahu himself is to embark on a tour of Europe at the end of the week, taking in Britain, Germany, Norway and Spain, while Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai will go to France and the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, Industry and Trade Minister Nathan Shtronsky set off to Russia on Sunday for two days of talks widely expected to focus on Israeli apprehensions over Russian nuclear cooperation with Iran.

Mr. Shtronsky's office said the former Soviet dissident would meet Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov

and other senior officials. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi visited Russia.

"In his meetings, Minister Shtronsky will discuss increasing the strategic cooperation between Israel and Russia as well as other issues on the agenda," his office said in a statement.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Shtronsky met U.S. Vice President Al Gore in Washington to discuss efforts to encourage Russia to end any nuclear and missile cooperation with Iran.

A spokesman for the Israeli embassy in Washington, expressing concern about "the dangers that such an Iranian threat poses to Israel," said during Mr. Shtronsky's U.S. visit that the minister would go to Moscow to discuss the issue.

Several explanations popular on Mossad mission in Switzerland

BERN (AFP) — Mossad agents caught here last week were on a mission to thwart a reported Islamist threat against the Israeli embassy or a Jewish organisation, Sonntags Blick reported Sunday.

The newspaper gave no source for its report, which said Mossad had particularly targeted "the Lebanese Abdullah Al Zein" and the apartment where the agents were caught red-handed as they tried to plant bugging devices.

In Jerusalem, newspapers said the target was 32-year-old electrician Abdullah Al Zein, a Lebanese-born Swiss national, who was suspected of links to the Hizbollah guerrilla movement.

Mr. Zein had not, however, lived in the apartment for

around four years, although his ex-wife continued to occupy the flat, the reports said.

Sonntags Blick said the man had moved to Clarens, near Montreux, but was now believed to be in the Bekaa plain area of Lebanon.

Sonntags Zeitung, meanwhile, quoted secret service sources as suggesting several possible explanations for the "embarrassing affair, including an excuse to push Mossad boss Danny Yatom out when the mission failed."

It questioned whether Mossad would send five agents on a mission simply to bug a telephone, or whether they might not have been sent for another kind of operation, such as a kidnapping.

On the night of Feb. 18-19, a

woman alerted police when three men carrying a suitcase entered a house in the Bern region, leaving two others on watch outside.

One of the five agents is in Swiss custody and arrest warrants have been issued for the other four.

Israel holds Hizbollah, a Shiite Islamist group fighting against Israel's occupation of south Lebanon, responsible for two attacks in Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994, which led to more than 100 deaths.

Israel on Friday apologised to Switzerland over the incident following an official protest by Bern.

Swiss President Flavio Cotti said that the incident is "a serious and unacceptable infringement of Swiss sovereignty."

Turk Islamists drop call for 'just order'

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Turkish Islamists have dropped the banned Welfare Party's hard-line rhetoric and its call for a "just order" from their platform in the transition to the newly formed Virtue Party, the Turkish press reported Sunday.

In its manifesto, published in excerpts by the daily newspaper Milliyet, the Virtue Party calls for better relations

with the United States and the European Union as well as for a simplification of the tax system and moderate interest rates.

The Welfare Party, in its programme for a "just order" in accordance with Islamic principles, had condemned Wall Street as a centre of Zionism and proposed to abolish taxes and interest altogether.

The Virtue Party, set up by aides to Welfare Party chief Necmettin Erbakan in December, has been joined by 133 of 147 former Welfare deputies so far.

Its manifesto makes no mention of the religious Imam Hatip schools or Koran courses that were a bone of contention between the Welfare Party and the country's pro-secular generals.



Indian theatre kicks off Paris culture fest

PARIS (AFP) — A ceremonial Indian theatre piece involving a troupe of richly-decorated dancers and singers launched Sunday a month-long world cultural festival in Paris. The spectacle, "The Execution of Dussassana," hails from the country's Kathakali style of performance and involves five musicians and five male actors wearing intricate costumes which each weigh six kilograms. The Festival of the Imaginary, hosted in the Maison des Cultures du Monde, then dips into other countries' traditions, including the Caucasus, Croatia, Guinea, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and Yemen.

Chilean city, Antofagasta, protests Spanish insult

ANTOFAGASTA (AFP) — This Pacific port city is not going to take an insult sitting down: top Spanish language-meisters have officially made their town's name a derogatory noun. "Antofagasta" is making its appearance in new historical dictionaries of the Royal Spanish Language Academy with the rather unpleasant definition: "A person whose presence in a salon gathering or cafe is undesirable or irritating." So the city is striking back. It is draping itself in flags as a sign of anger, and the city council registered an unexpectedly vehement protest, declaring the neologism an insult and an attack on the dignity of its citizens.

Di Caprio, Morissette, get political in Cuba

HAVANA (AFP) — "Titanic" star Leonardo Di Caprio has cruised to Cuba, where the daily Granma pictured him alongside Canadian songstress Alanis Morissette. There was no suggestion they were making tropical music together, but the twosome were described in the Communist Party's newspaper as "open, down-to-earth and friendly." "I'm here to understand, just like anyone else," Di Caprio is quoted as saying. But the U.S. actor, apparently cutting his political teeth, might be hearing from U.S. authorities: Americans are not allowed to spend money here under the U.S. embargo on Cuba, and if they do, can face fines and even jail time.

Prince William doesn't want to be king

LONDON (R) — Fifteen-year-old Prince William has told his father Prince Charles he does not want to be king, a British Sunday newspaper reported. The People tabloid quoted senior palace aides as saying William had become more resistant to the prospect of assuming the British throne since the death of his mother, Princess Diana, six months ago. William is second in line of succession to Queen Elizabeth after Charles. The People, in a front-page story, quoted a senior royal courier as describing William as a frustrated young man. "When he looks at the royal family all he has seen in recent years is misery," the report said.

Naked anti-fur protesters 'disturb public order'

HONG KONG (R) — Two naked women in an anti-fur protest were led away by Hong Kong police minutes after they emerged to cross a busy street in the central business district on Saturday. The two women, members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), painted their nude bodies with leopard spots, drew cat-like whiskers on their whitened cheeks and carried a banner reading "Only animals should wear fur."

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